CHRIST IN THE PSALMS.

"All things must be fulfilled which were written in the

PSALMS *concerning me."*

LUKE XXIV. 44.

CHRIST IN THE PSALMS.

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

SECOND, FORTY-FIFTH, AND HUNDRED-AND-TENTH PSALMS.

In a Series of Discourses.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following Discourses have been delivered by me, in the parish of which I am in charge, since the commencement of the present year. In preparing them for the press I have added a few notes, the matter of which could not have been well introduced into the body of the Discourses themselves.

Although more has been written on the Psalms than perhaps any other portion of the Old Testament, yet I am not aware that the three, which I have here endeavoured to explain, have ever been brought, as it were, under one view, and treated *as one*, before. And yet they evidently *are* one—one in their Subject, and one in the light in which their Subject is contemplated. No other Psalm, moreover, in the whole hundred and fifty, can claim companionship with them; they stand alone in solitary grandeur, like David's "mightiest three," to which even the "mighties" could not attain. The seventy-second is, indeed, generally ranked in the same category; but the seventy-second belongs to a period of the Church's history, to the outskirts of which these majestic three only lead us. Here we have rebellion, carnage, ruin, and desolation: there

> "Before Him in the mountains
> Shall peace, the herald, go;
> And righteousness, in fountains,
> From hill to valley flow."

It is with the wars, successes, and victories of our Spiritual David that we mingle in the second, forty-fifth, and hundred-and-tenth Psalms; whereas, when we pass to the seventy-second, we find ourselves in the universal reign of righteousness and peace of our Spiritual Solomon. These three, therefore, leave us on the borders of that better time in which the seventy-second finds us.

In the preparation of these Discourses I have consulted all the expositors that lay within my reach, and, after comparing their views together, adopted that which seemed the most satisfactory. I may, therefore, say, in the words of Bishop Horne, "Much labour has been often bestowed where little appears." I have not, however, followed any one servilely, and in some important places have thought it necessary to differ from all.

Mine has been a pleasant task, whatever the reader may think of the performance. In writings of such a distant date, to find, so clearly and unmistakably, Him whose promises light up the hereafter, and point us to a home of undying happiness beyond the grave—what can the human mind engage in so captivating as this? Is not this to solve the problem of eternity? In the study bestowed, therefore, upon these Songs of Zion, the pleasure is more than a reward for the toil.

If these Discourses shall tend, even in the smallest degree, to advance the cause of Him who is their glorious theme, my dearest object shall be attained, and my highest ambition gratified.

October, 1862.

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CHRIST IN THE PSALMS.

DISCOURSE I.

Psalm II.

"1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

"2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying,

"3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

"4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

"5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

"6 Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

"7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

"8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

"9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

"10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

"11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

"12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

THERE is no part of God's Word in more frequent use among Christians than the Book of Psalms. In the congregation, in the family, or in the closet, its language is daily read and sung by thousands, and has been daily read and sung by thousands ever since the days of David. And yet perhaps, on the whole, there are few books in the Bible so little understood. It is to be feared that the repetition of the Psalms, at least in the congregation, is often a mere mechanical exercise in which the understanding takes little or no part. Devotional minds can, indeed, enter into the spirit of many of these compositions, without, it may be, fully comprehending all their meaning. Whether learned or unlearned we can find language here to express the deepest and holiest feelings of the soul; and hence the high esteem in which the Psalms have been held by the spiritually-minded in every age. There is something here for all capacities, if the heart be only anxiously feeling after God—the child can wade and the giant swim in its living waters. But although devotional minds love the Psalms, and often derive unutterable comfort and consolation from them, yet it is equally true that those who love them now, would love them more, if they understood them better.

If I, therefore, shall succeed in enabling you to under-

stand even one Psalm better than you may have hitherto done, and thereby induce you to apply yourselves more in future to the study of these Divine compositions, I shall have laboured to good purpose.

In a book like this, which was written principally for purposes of devotion, we should expect to find, if anywhere else in the Old Testament, some traces of that Adorable One who has made devotion what it is, and without whom it would have had no meaning. If these Psalms were written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, it were singular if that Spirit made no allusion to Him of whom he was to testify so remarkably in after ages, and whose testimony of Him was to be his great work. Had we never read the Psalms, and had any one told us that they were inspired compositions written for the public worship of the Israelitish Church, but that they never spoke of the coming Shiloh, the hope and pride of every Israelitish heart, we would not have believed it. Nothing but the mere impossibility of applying any of these compositions to Christ by honest and legitimate interpretation, could have convinced us that Christ was not here.

I propose bringing before you three of what are generally called the Messianic Psalms, viz., the second, the forty-fifth, and the hundred and tenth. I have chosen these three, not only because they are Messianic, that is, have Messiah or Christ for their subject, but also because they are all three agreed in their representations of Christ as a King and a Conqueror.

Other Psalms, such as the sixteenth, the twenty-second, and the fortieth, foretell the *sufferings* of Christ; these

three point not to *His* sufferings, but to the sufferings of His enemies; not to His humiliation as a servant, but to His exaltation as a Universal Sovereign.

Having made these few preliminary observations, permit me now to relate as briefly as I can the scope or argument of the Psalm before us.

1. In the *first* place, we see an uproarious uprising of the nations. The heathen rage, or, as it is in the margin, "assemble tumultuously." We see the kings and rulers of the earth laying their plans, devising their schemes, and forming their resolutions. The heathen, the people, the kings, the rulers, have all one object in view, namely, opposition and hostility to Jehovah and to His Anointed. Here is a wide-spread insurrection—nay, a universal rebellion. High and low are of one mind in it. Kings, princes, and people are agreed in taking up the watchword, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

2. In the *second* place, we have God sitting in the heavens and deriding the fruitless rage and foolish purposes of those men: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." We see, moreover, that while He laughs at the vanity of their projects He is deeply offended at their spirit of rebellion, and that He is determined to inflict on them the punishment which rebels to their lawful sovereign deserve,—"Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."

3. In the *third* place we have a decree or statute of Jehovah read to us; which decree or statute is represented as having been declared to those rebels in order to

convince them of the fruitlessness of their rebellion. In this decree God speaks of a certain person as His Son, and promises to give Him as an inheritance those very nations and people which were up in arms against Him. In order, moreover, to convince those rebels that they are included in the gift, God mentions the utmost parts of the earth as that which shall be given to His Son as a possession.

4. In the *fourth* place, the decree of Jehovah being read, an exhortation is addressed to the kings and judges of the earth, urging on them the necessity of "receiving the instruction of wisdom." They have now heard the decree, and must therefore be convinced how fruitless will be any endeavours on their part to break asunder the bands, and cast away the cords of the Lord, and of His Anointed. They are admonished, therefore, to take warning from the judgments threatened in that decree against all rebellious nations and powers, and to become loyal and loving subjects of their legitimate Sovereign. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the way."

Such is the scope or argument of the Psalm.

But the question arises, Is this language that we have been considering applicable to Christ, or David, or to both? Now there can be no doubt that it is applicable to Christ, but is it applicable to Him alone? Is all of it or any of it applicable to David? and in what degree?

To me it appears that it is applicable to David in only a very low degree, and many parts of it not applicable to him at all. Let me bring before your notice one or two particulars which I conceive are not true of David, and cannot be applied to him by any poetic licence.

1. The *first* particular that presents itself is introduced as an historical fact. Those kings, rulers, and people who are exciting such a commotion are represented as arming against the Anointed King for the sole purpose of throwing off His yoke: "Let us break their *bands* asunder," they say, "and cast away their *cords* from us." They are rebels, and not belligerents these men. Now this is not true, if understood of David and the neighbouring nations. On the contrary, when the Philistines had heard that David was anointed King over all Israel they assembled themselves to attack *him*: acting on the offensive; purposing, as it should seem, to reduce him and his subjects to the bondage of *their* yoke rather than to endeavour to throw off *his*. This part of the prophecy, therefore, cannot be understood of David.

2. In the *second* place, the subject of this Psalm is called the Son of God—the Son whom He has begotten (ver. 7); and this is a title which certainly cannot be applied to David, or indeed to any mere descendant of Adam.

3. In the *third* place, the heathen and the uttermost parts of the earth are promised to this Son as an inheritance and possession; a promise which, I need hardly say, was never fulfilled to David nor to any of his descendants. Many of the neighbouring states, indeed, paid him tribute, and brought gifts; but tributary states are not possessions, much less inheritances. Nor is it true, in any sense of the word, that the uttermost parts of the earth were ever given to David. The neighbouring states around Palestine, which alone paid him tribute, could not by any stretch of language be called the uttermost parts of the earth.

4. In the *fourth* place, the exhortation given to those nations to "kiss the Son lest he be angry, and so they perish from the way," carries the mind far beyond the respect and homage due to an earthly king. The word *kiss* implies worship and adoration, and cannot therefore be an exhortation to the Philistines, Moabites, and others, with respect to David. Equally inconsistent with the duty of one man towards another, no matter how different their social or relative positions might be, are the concluding words of the Psalm, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Surely no one can for a moment imagine that the meaning of these words is, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in David." And it is inconceivable that David, when he wrote the Psalm, could have attached any such meaning to the words. They carry the mind beyond the creature, no matter how high and exalted. This is language that could with no propriety be used of the highest archangel. You could not say of Michael himself, regarding him merely as an angel, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

These considerations afford, I think, sufficient proof that David is not the subject of this Psalm.

What then? Shall we exclude him altogether, as we do the other prophets from their prophecies, and say that he had Christ alone in his mind when he wrote,* or,

* This Psalm is without a superscription, but that David was the author of it is evident from Acts iv. 25.

The Coptic entitles it, "A Psalm of David. A prophecy concerning the dominions of Christ." The Arabic, "The second Psalm of David. A prophecy concerning the Lord Messiah and the calling of the Gentiles."

rather, that the Holy Ghost had Christ alone in his mind when he inspired him to write?

This would, perhaps, be going too far. I conceive that David's circumstances were the *occasion* of the Psalms being written, as well as its *groundwork*—its *substratum*. The prophecy arose from those circumstances like a heavenly building reared on an earthly foundation. Those circumstances were, in some degree, like the lines described on the terrestrial sphere, by the extension of which we can measure the celestial. This was not the case with the other prophets. Their circumstances seldom or never formed the groundwork of their prophecies. David, as a king, was a type of Christ, which the other prophets were not. He was the miniature likeness of Israel's great King. It was to be expected, therefore, that his kingly state should bear a resemblance to that of his greater Son. But what is true of the greater may not be true of the less, no matter how perfect their resemblance to each other. Accordingly the greater part of this Psalm, though perfectly true of the antitype, is not by any means true of the type. I conceive, therefore, that David's circumstances were the occasion and groundwork of the Psalm, but no more. There was something in those circumstances bearing a *resemblance* and corresponding *in some degree* to the ideas here presented to us, and the facts foretold. The Holy Ghost chose that particular time to inspire the mind of David to write, because the affairs of his kingdom, which were then uppermost in his mind, were the foreshadowings of those greater things which it was the Holy Ghost's purpose to foretell.* It is

* Bishop Lowth thinks that the double character of the subject

possible that when David began to compose this Psalm his thoughts carried him no farther than himself. It is possible that he did not sit down with the knowledge or

of the Psalm, namely, the Proper and Allegorical, is perfect throughout. "Si Carmen hoc perlegentes," he says, "primo in Propria Davidis Persona oculos defigimus, sententia apparet satis et per se perspicua, et Sacræ Historiæ luce abunde illustrata. Quod si ea secuti indicia ad interiorem jam partem animum intendimus, et ad Personam Davidis Allegoricam eadem accommodamus; major rerum ordo protinus exsurgit.....Licebit perspicere duarum Imaginum et magnam inter se distantiam et perpetuam tamen conspirationem et consensum, et, quasi inter cognitas, oris ac lineamentorum omnium miram similitudinem." (De Sacra Poesi, Præl. xi.) "If when we read this Psalm we regard David in his Proper Character, the language appears sufficiently plain, and fully illustrated by the light of Sacred History. But if we adapt the same language to the Allegorical Character of David, a greater order of things forthwith arises..... Thus there are two Images widely apart indeed, but in constant harmony and concord, bearing a striking, and, as it were, a family resemblance in every feature."

Michaelis, on the other hand, would exclude David altogether. "What is there to induce us to understand the Psalm of David," he asks, "since on the authority of Paul, it treats of Christ, His resurrection, and His kingdom? Non nego," he adds, "David is victorias, majore verbis audacia data, ejusmodi carmine celebrari potuisse; aliorum insuper, de quibus nemo hic cogitare sustinet, regum Hierosolymitanorum: at meminerimus, orationem non ad eos omnes pertinere, de quibus simile quid dici posset, sed ad illum unum de quo agitur; qui si hic Christus est, dimittamus Davidem." (Notæ in Lowth.) "I do not deny that, if we add a greater boldness to the words, the victories of David, or even of other Jerusalem kings to whom no one can think of applying this language, might be celebrated in a song like this. But let us remember that a composition does not relate to all of whom something similar might be said, but to him alone who is the subject. Now if the subject be Christ, let us have done with David."

the feeling that he was going to write a prophecy. He felt himself influenced to write, but whether he knew that it was the influence of the prophetic Spirit or not, it would perhaps be impossible to decide. There can be no doubt, however, that when the Psalm was written he knew it was a prophecy. Nor can there be any doubt that he had not proceeded far in the writing of it before he was aware of the fact. The enlarging of his sentiments, and the swelling out of his language must have soon convinced him that he was writing under the influence of the Holy Ghost. He must have known that he was writing of another than himself; that it was not simply an anointed king, or an anointed priest, or an anointed prophet, but He who was emphatically the Anointed, who was the subject of his song.

David was, therefore, a Christian, at least in a limited sense of the word. Here is a song of his written of Christ as really and truly as ever Heber, or Wesley, or Watts wrote songs of Christ. The only difference is that this is a song of Christ to come, and theirs are songs of Christ already come. See, dear friends, what a centre Christ is! Here we have a David singing of Him more than a thousand years before He was born, and in our own day we have men singing of Him more than eighteen hundred years after He has died and risen again. In the one case the Holy Ghost acts as the spirit of prophecy, in the other as the spirit of faith. He points forward to Christ in the former, and points back to Him in the latter. For recollect it just requires as much the Spirit of God to enable men to look back to Christ now as it did to enable them to look forward to Him then.

The spirit of faith is as much a gift of God the Holy Ghost as the spirit of prophecy; and it is as great and gracious an act of His sovereignty to confer the one as the other. Nay, we may go still farther than this. The Spirit of God was just as much needed by those who lived in the days of Christ, and saw Him, and conversed with Him in the flesh, to enable them to see Him, and to know Him as He ought to be seen and known, as it was by David, or as it is by us. And why is this? Why had the immediate followers of Christ no advantage in this respect over the very first or over the very last believers? Simply because it is the same Spirit that leads men to Christ in all ages of the world. What was the Word to the apostles themselves who had accompanied their Master from the first day of His entering on His public ministry until that ministry was drawing to a close? "When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John xvi. 13, 14.) These men had been with Christ every day for the last two or three years, and yet they were not yet guided into all truth. They had not yet attained to a knowledge of the things of Christ. It would be only after Christ was taken away from them that they should know Him. The Holy Ghost would come and show them the things of Christ when Christ should be in heaven. What advantage then had those men over David, or over believers at the present day? Christ was in heaven when David wrote, and He is in heaven when I speak, and He was in heaven when He was revealed to the apostles; why then may He not be revealed to us,

and why should He not have been revealed to David as clearly and convincingly as He was revealed to them? He shines as bright eighteen hundred years after He ascended to His glory, and He shone as bright a thousand years before He descended from His glory, as He did when, His work completed and His labour done, He sat down for ever at His Father's right hand.

What a brotherhood is this to which we belong as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ! What a glorious communion is ours! See how we are knit and bound to the excellent of the earth of every age and of every clime. The guiding stars of our pilgrimage are the same faith, the same hope, the same Spirit, as those which lit up the paths of the saints of the remotest time, and which must be the conductors of every saint who shall yet live on the earth until time itself shall be no longer. The same Lord, too, is the Lord of all. As there is but one centre in the universe, so there is but one Lord, one Head to all the redeemed ones of Adam's race, no matter in what period of the world's history they lived, or in what corner of the globe their lot was cast. All have one object of love and praise and adoration. Christ is all and in all. Surely the greatest privilege that ever God bestowed on a created being is that of being a Christian. How enrapturing the thought that you belong to the brotherhood of all the good, the pure, and the holy who have ever lived, or ever yet shall live in all this wide world! Every saint that you have ever read or heard of as living on the earth from the time of Adam until now, is joined to you by a bond of love and endearment which death and the grave cannot dissolve, and which eternity can only draw closer.

And how still more enrapturing to reflect that the bond which knits us together is the very bond which joins us to the glorious Head himself, and that our union with Him is the sole and efficient cause of our union with the millions on millions who are His! This is that which gives this wonderful brotherhood its greatest happiness, as well as its greatest glory and lustre. David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, who sang of Christ so long ago, is united to you in this blest communion, because he loved the Lord whom you love, and adored the Christ whom you adore. Isaiah, who, in wrapt ecstacy at the views of Christ, which were vouchsafed to him by the Spirit which has pointed you to Calvary, touched the most celestial chords that ever were swept by mortal fingers, is united to you also by the same golden bond of union. His heavenly strains were all inspired by the love that inspires you; he was taught by the same Spirit, and sang the praises of the same Lord.

There is one consideration which I must touch on before I conclude. It is evident that holy men under the Old Dispensation saw Christ and looked to Him, and by His merits obtained the salvation which they hoped for; but, at the same time, it cannot be denied that they had not such clear views of the Redeemer of the world as have been vouchsafed to us who come after. They saw Messiah as it were in a cloud; we see Him as it were in a glass. They were in the state of the man restored to sight in the Gospel, when he saw men as trees walking; we are in the state of the same man, when, on Jesus having touched his eyes the second time, he saw all things clearly. The Holy Ghost does not vouchsafe equal light to all men.

He dispenses His graces as well as His gifts, not to every man alike, but severally as He will. Even in our own day there are many sincere believers who have but dim views of Christ.

You recollect what the Apostle Peter says on this subject. Speaking of the Christian salvation, he tells us that "the prophets who prophesied of the grace that should come, enquired and searched diligently regarding it: searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (1 Pet. i. 10, 11.)

The Prophets, therefore, did not fully understand the testimony which they themselves bore to Christ; or rather, I should say, the testimony which the Spirit within them bore. They spoke very clearly of the salvation that was to come, but they themselves had not a very clear view of the circumstances connected with that salvation, or why inquire and search diligently regarding it? Consequently, we may safely say that when David wrote this Psalm, he had no more than a dim conception of the meaning of his own words. That he had some view, and a saving view of Christ is certain; but the exact degree of light in which he saw Him, it would perhaps be impossible to determine.

One thing, however, we are sure of; David knew that "the Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and that his word was on his tongue." (2 Sam. xxiii. 2.) He knew that God had "made an everlasting covenant with him, ordered in all things and sure" (v. 5); and as life drew to a close, he could speak of that covenant as "all his salvation and all his desire." (v. 5.).

But the question of primary importance to us as individuals must ever be, Have we yet got a saving view of this Son of God, this Zion-exalted King, whom David saw in the dim distance, this glorious One to whom Prophets have borne their rejoicing testimony?

We have seen the high exalted privileges of believers; but what will it matter to us how great their privileges are if we do not belong to their number? It will only intensify the pain of loss to know how much we have lost. It will perhaps be the greatest source of misery to souls in hell to contemplate the glory of Christ's kingdom, and the ineffable delight of those who belong to it. They will see all this splendour, and greatness, and majesty; all this universal love and communion; all this unity and concord of the family of the redeemed: they will see all this everlasting happiness of the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, and hear their never-ending songs of love and praise and adoration to Him who has loved them and washed them in His blood, and made them kings and priests unto God; and they will reflect that all this glory and happiness might have been theirs if they had only been wise in time.

May God grant that such a reflection may never be ours, for the Redeemer's sake.

DISCOURSE II.

PSALM II. 1, 2, 3.

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

WE have already seen, that the circumstances in which the writer was placed at the time this Psalm was composed, were the occasion of it, and in some degree its groundwork and foundation, and gave it its form and colouring; but that the Psalm itself is a direct and remarkable prophecy of Christ. We are now, therefore, to regard it as a prophecy of Christ, and as such we shall proceed to endeavour to explain it.

And in the outset, observe, it is not a prophecy of another concerning the Son of God, but He himself is introduced as the speaker. David is not represented as speaking of Christ; but Christ is represented as speaking of himself. It is not, "The Lord said unto the Messiah, or unto my Lord," as it is in another place, but "The Lord said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee." *

* Cocceius makes the Church the speaker, to the end of the fifth verse; the sixth verse to be spoken by God the Father; and from

Here, then, we have the Spirit of Christ speaking of himself through the organs of David. You recollect, St. Peter tells us that it was the Spirit of Christ that spoke in the prophets. All those foreshadowings of the Son of God, therefore, that we find throughout the pages of the Old Testament Scripture, were given by the Son of God himself. He just used the prophets as *media* through which to make revelations of the work that was to be accomplished, and the glory that was to be revealed in the latter time. He was the light of the world before His incarnation, as well as after it. The whole economy of grace, from the moment that Adam ate the forbidden fruit until the last of the redeemed shall be gathered in, has been, is, and shall be under His direct superintendence.

In the Scripture under our consideration to-day, the reception which the first introduction of the kingdom of Christ into the world met with from the world in general, is brought most vividly before us. We have here a brief sketch of the history of the Christian Church during at least the first three centuries. No human pen could have written so much in so few words. Read any ecclesiastical history of the first ages of the Church, and when you have done so, you will be forced to confess that the historian was no more than an expositor of the prophet; that all that the former told you in many pages, is no more than the latter has told you in a few verses. Christ by the hand of David describes His own kingdom, the opposition it would meet with wherever its claims were heard, and its ultimate

the sixth verse to the end of the Psalm, by the Son. Bishop Horsley divides it thus:—Part i., verses 1—6, Psalmist; Part ii., verses 7—9, Messiah; Part iii., verses 10—12, Psalmist.

triumph over all its enemies, so clearly, and in so short a compass, that the very style of the description would prove, if such proof were needed, its Divine authorship.

Is there not something particularly satisfactory in finding Christ and His kingdom described to us in a work written more than a thousand years before He died on the cross of Calvary, or lay in the stable of Bethlehem? We ought always to connect this fact (I mean the fact of the Spirit of prophecy testifying of His coming, and His kingdom, many ages before He appeared in the world),—we ought always to connect this fact with the promises that are made by himself in the New Testament to all who are His. We ought always to try and recollect that this Divine Being, to whom the prophets bore their rejoicing testimony, is He who has said, "I will give unto mine eternal life." "They shall never perish." "I will raise them up at the last day." "He that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live." We ought to think of Christ in all the glory and majesty in which He is brought before us, when we read these promises. We ought to think of Him, not only as we find Him in the New Testament, but also as He is foretold and foreshadowed to us in the Old. For remember that both Old and New Testaments are only one great mirror in which to see the Saviour of the world—a perfect mirror when taken together, and therefore, necessarily imperfect when separate. It is only by seeing Christ in the whole Bible, that we get a complete view of Him; and, consequently, it is by regarding Him as He is presented to us in the whole Bible, that we can the more fully realize His promises. We are all aware that the clearer and more perfect views

we have of Him, the more real is our own Christianity, the firmer our faith, and the brighter our hopes. Let us, then, ever regard Him, in whom we trust for the salvation of our souls, as the Christ of the whole Bible.

In the verses now under our consideration, we have a glowing description of the opposition made to Christ and His cause, on its first appearance in the world. "The heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing." Here are both Jews and Gentiles introduced; for, under the two terms, "heathen," and "people," both are evidently included. Jews and Gentiles are therefore united for once—united in their rage, fury, and machinations against one common object. I have already observed, that the word translated *rage*, properly signifies, as it is rendered in the margins of our Bibles, to assemble tumultuously. It gives one the idea of multitudes of people flocking together under some great excitement. We hear, as it were, the hoarse and loud murmur of their angry gatherings, like the roaring of the sea, or the growling of the distant thunder. It just expresses such a state of things as you would see in this country, if it were rumoured that an enemy had landed on our shores. There would be hurrying to and fro, not from fear, but from indignation, from one end of the country to the other; and the voice of angry meetings would be heard, no matter where you turned your steps. Now, no word could be chosen to express more forcibly and fully the rage and indignation with which the nations of the world met the first advances of Christianity amongst their people; Jews and Gentiles vied with each other in the ferocity with which they endeavoured to uproot and destroy "this new

sect," wherever it appeared. And this enmity began with the very beginning of Christianity. No sooner had the first notes of its heavenly voice been heard on the earth, than the murmur of the enemy's rage rose up against it. No sooner had angels heralded its coming, and wise men been attracted to its light, than the angry step of rebellion glided stealthily towards its ruin. Christianity need not thank the world that it now embraces its most enlightened and civilized nations. It has nothing but what it has won; it is great, because it has conquered. It has gained its ground inch by inch too. Never have there been such hard-fought fields as those which Christianity has won from the world, and the world's prince. It was not provinces whose inhabitants were cowards, or ignorant of the arts of warfare, that it had to overcome; they were, on the contrary, fearless soldiers and skilful leaders that rose up to oppose it.

When Herod slaughtered the infants of Bethlehem, in hopes that he might thereby have the life of Him who was born King of the Jews, he was only fulfilling the prophetic word; he was standing up against the Lord and against His Anointed. When the chief priests and Pharisees gathered their councils, asking, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles; and if we let Him alone, all men will believe on Him" (John xi. 47), they were only acting as David in spirit had seen them act, more than a thousand years before.

But it was after Christ was risen from the dead, and His Gospel began to be preached throughout the world, that the rage, fury, and opposition of the nations assumed more unmistakably the character described by the Psalmist.

When Peter and John had been imprisoned for teaching the people, and preaching through Jesus the resurrection from the dead, and on their release had returned to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them, that whole company with one accord applied these very words of the Psalmist to the things which were then befalling themselves. "Lord, thou art God," they exclaimed, "who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings." (Acts iv. 2, 24—29.) Their threatenings! Here was the rage of the nations begun in good earnest. From this period onward the history of the Church of Christ is a history of opposition and persecution on the part of both Jews and Gentiles. Now commences the grand struggle between the kingdom of light and that of darkness—between the cause of Christ and the cause of Satan.

It is not my intention to detain you with the accounts given by historians of the sufferings of Christians in the first ages of the Church. Every one who knows anything of the history of Christianity knows that its way lay in those days through opposition and persecution the most determined and bloody that ever were stirred up by the spirit of evil. Racks, fires, gibbets, wild beasts, and pitch-burning shirts—these were what the world had in store for the harmless professors of the Gospel of Jesus. To be a Christian was the greatest crime that one could be

guilty of. The word of their Lord was found true to the letter by His faithful followers, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." The pure and spotless Son of God, whose only crime was His goodness, was found guilty of a deeper and more unpardonable offence than the robber and murderer Barabbas. And so the harmless citizen who dared to call upon His name was more fiercely and unrelentingly dragged to torture and death than the public robber or the midnight assassin. The cry of the nations concerning every one who dared to name the name of Christ was only a repetition of that first cry of the Jews, when they surrounded the hall of the Roman Governor, "Not this man, but Barabbas." No blood could satisfy those men like the blood of a Christian. They revelled in the sight of his tortures, and his shrieks in the flames were their sweetest music. Apart from the Book of God itself, we have no such proof, whether we consult the whole range of history or experience, of the sovereignty of Satan over man in his natural state, as in the persecutions which the Church of Christ has been called on to endure. That must be *evil*, absolutely, unmixedly evil, which is opposed to *good*. When, therefore, we see the rage of the nations against the only religion worthy of an immortal being that ever shed its holy influence on our world, it is the fury of the Prince of darkness that we behold. He is up in arms to defend his usurped sovereignty against the demands of the lawful Sovereign. The nations rage, the kings set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together; they act in concert, because they act under one head; one mighty will sways the wills of all; the Prince of this world prescribes laws

to his own subjects; they march out against one object, for their head is one; they march against the light, for the Prince of darkness is their leader.

In this description of the unanimous rebellion of Jews and Gentiles against the claims and pretensions of Christianity, we have a variety of terms used. We have first the nations surging and roaring in their anger. We have next the people imagining, or, rather, meditating, their projects of opposition. We have the kings of the earth taking a firm stand against its advances, and the rulers consulting together as to the best and most efficient means of impeding its progress. You see the wonderful unity and concord that exist amongst all ranks and degrees of men in this matter. However Satan's subjects may disagree and quarrel among themselves, they are sure to act in concert and harmony when Christ and His cause are to be opposed. Herod and Pilate may fight and jar all their lives long, but let Christ be once brought on the scene, and they are friends at once. Satan's kingdom could never have lasted so long if it had been divided against itself. No one has ever understood the wisdom of the aphorism, "Unity is strength," better than Satan. And how fully does the Holy Ghost describe this unity and concord in the verses before us! "The heathen rage:" here is the tumultuating and cruel multitude clamouring for the blood of the Christians. Here we have the fellows of the baser sort, always ready and eager for deeds of outrage and violence, often the mere tools of others, the instruments for carrying out the nefarious schemes of wicked and designing men.

"The people imagine a vain thing." * Here we have the more thinking portion of mankind, philosophers with their arguments, and orators with their false accusations and reproaches. These do not tumultuate like the former class; they meditate how to accomplish the same end by policy and stratagem; they would do by fraud what the others would do by force. They are as much opposed to the kingdom of Christ as their tumultuating allies, but they are not so uproarious.

"The kings of the earth set themselves." It is not only the rabble and the people that are up in arms against Christ and His cause (as it sometimes happens that a cause may be very distasteful to the people in general, and yet the Government may not consider itself justified in interfering); the sovereign powers have also taken a decided stand to oppose them to the uttermost.

"The rulers take counsel together." † After the kings have assumed a hostile attitude, we should naturally expect that these rulers or princes, by whom may be meant

* Venema renders these words thus:—"Et nationes protrudunt sputum," understanding the word which our English translators have rendered "vain thing" to signify "spittle." Such is, indeed, the meaning of the word in Arabic, but not in Hebrew. If it could be shown to bear such a signification, the two first lines would be very expressive of the fruitless rage of maddened multitudes, thus,—

> "Why do the heathen madly tumultuate,
> And the people foam with anger?"

† Venema says that the word here rendered, "take counsel together," properly signifies "super pulvino recumbere," and thence is applied to the secret counsels as of persons reclining on the same couch.

either the ministers of those kings or governors of provinces, would also espouse the popular cause. They are represented as consulting together how most effectually to put an end to the Christian religion.

You see how all classes of men are included in these two verses. Kings, senators, and people of all ranks and degrees are here introduced as rising with one will against the Lord and against His anointed.

I have said that the Holy Ghost seems to make especial reference to the opposition made to the kingdom of Christ on its first appearance amongst men. But the language may be very well understood to apply to the resistance which has been offered, or may yet be offered, to the demands of genuine Christianity in any age of the world. The spirit that persecuted the early Christians to the death has manifested its presence at various times, and in various places. We need not doubt that the bloody violence of Popery towards all those who presumed to dissent from her unscriptural and anti-scriptural dogmas, is also aimed at in the prophecy under our consideration. Satan had been driven by the general spread of the Gospel out of the strongholds of heathendom, which he had combated for more than three hundred years; but though vanquished for a while, he was far from being finally overcome. He found his position untenable as an open enemy, and, consequently, resolved to try his chances of success as a professed friend. He crept into the enemy's camp as he had done into Eden of old, and secretly, and in the garb of friendship, contrived to sow once more the seeds of disobedience and rebellion. Henceforward he identified himself with the name which

of all others he most hated and feared, and, under the cloak and guise of Christianity, laboured to overthrow the cause of Christ. This was a movement worthy of Satan. It was his last attempt, and it was his best. Never had he been so nearly the vanquisher of Christianity as when he had assumed the name of Christian. Popery was emphatically the devil's masterpiece.

The rage and fury of the nations arose the second time against the Lord and against His Anointed. The flames for those who dared to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour alone, were kindled once more. The fire and the sword were quenched again, after a long interval, in the blood of the martyrs. The Inquisitions of Italy and Spain, the more than human cruelty exercised on all who dared to call in question the dogmas of the Church, the history of the Waldenses, Lollards, and Albigenses, all tell the tale of their authorship. The horrors of those relations carry the mind to something more than merely human ferocity. The spirit that had led on heathen Rome to the encounter had evidently reappeared in Popish Rome, having lost nothing, but rather having gained in wrath, power, and malignancy.

Never was the kingdom of Christ in greater apparent danger of being wholly and completely subdued than it was by the all but universal spread of Popery. The woman was drunken with the blood of the martyrs, and it almost seemed as if there had been none left to tell the tale of his fellows' wrongs. The blood of the martyrs, however, has ever been the seed of the Church. The bush may burn, but it can never be consumed. As in idolatrous Israel, Elijah thought that he only was left a

prophet of the Lord, and yet there were seven thousand men reserved who had not bowed the knee to Baal, so was it in equally idolatrous Rome. There were still a few witnesses of Jesus in the Church's greatest extremity. The nations might rage, the kings of the earth might set themselves, and the rulers might take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, but it was in vain.

But there is another point of view in which the language of the verses before us may be very appropriately applied. The heathen nations of the world and Popish Rome are not the only adversaries to the cause of Christ which Satan has stirred up. On the contrary, the natural heart of man in every age is the greatest and most stubborn rebel that has ever opposed itself to the legitimate sway of the Lord and of His Anointed. Here is a rebel whose cry has ever been, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." * Satan has been driven out of his strongholds of heathenism and Popery; he can and dare no longer persecute the cause of Christ by the strong arm of human laws; but there is one stronghold out of which he has never yet been driven (except, indeed, in the case of a comparatively small number of the human race), and that is the natural heart of man. This stronghold was his first, and it shall be his last; when it is lost, his cause is lost. It is here that he now carries on his rebellion in the world. The invi-

* "Just as we see it is with all the enemies of Christ, who, when compelled to be subject to His authority, reckon it not less degrading than if the utmost disgrace were put upon them."—*Calvin in loc. Calvin Trans. Society.*

tation of our lawful Sovereign—of Him to whom we owe, not only our truest service, but also our deepest gratitude and love, is—"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." But the natural heart of man, prompted by Satan, answers, "No; we will not have this man to rule over us; 'Let us break his bands asunder and cast away his cords.'"

We ourselves, therefore, dear friends, as individuals, are concerned in this prophecy of David. Do we continue to resist, and rebel against the sovereignty of Jesus? This, after all, is the important question. Have we submitted to His yoke, or do we still continue to endeavour to break it asunder? Are we still under the sway of the world, the flesh, and the devil? or have we, by the help of the Spirit of God, gained the mastery over them? We were the bondsmen of Satan once, but are we the freedmen of Christ now? Remember that he whom the Son has made free is free indeed. No freedom like the freedom of Christ's true and loyal subjects. It is an easy yoke that we bear, and a light burden that we carry, when the adorable Jesus is our Master and Lord. None was ever galled by that yoke or wearied by that burden. It is a yoke that makes a happy freedman of an unhappy slave, and a burden that carries him who carries it. O happy the man who has thrown off the heavy soul-depressing galling fetters of sin and Satan, and submitted himself wholly and unreservedly to the service of Christ! Such a one has just begun to know what happiness means. He has just entered on a bright path that will every day grow brighter. Once enter the life-giving covenant, "Jesus is mine and I am his," and then farewell for ever sorrow, anxiety, and care! Farewell for ever death's

sting and the grave's victory! What are the world's sorrows and cares, its changes and uncertainties, its dark history of the past, or its gloomy prospect for the future, to the man whose rest is in heaven? What are death and the grave, the parting from loved ones, and the being for ever forgotten, to him who has ceased to regard this world as his home? What are the world and all that it can give to him who has begun to confess himself a stranger and a foreigner in it, and to see that he has no abiding city here?—the man who can look forward with faith and confidence to that city which *is* abiding, whose builder and maker is God? Here lie the sum and glory of the religion of Jesus. Here lies the rest which they shall most assuredly find who have taken upon them His blessed yoke. What is the world to them or the world's sorrows? They are conquerors over all the enemies that can rise against their peace, ay, and more than conquerors, through Him who loved them! More than conquerors; for they not only overcome, they *rejoice* in afflictions and temptations; they *joy* in tribulations and trials, knowing, as they do, that all these things only strengthen their faith, confirm their hope, and intensify their love. They who have learned of Christ will kiss the rod that will bring them nearer to Him. No affliction can outweigh the peace that will accompany or follow it, if Christ be in it. This is a peace which may well be said to pass all understanding; and which, as the world cannot give, neither can it take away.

This peace, which is worth ten thousand worlds, is offered to you, my Christian friends, to each one of you,

by One who cannot deceive. Cease, then, I entreat you, from that which cannot profit. Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; cease from sin, whose end is destruction; cease from the world, which you must so soon leave, and seek to Him in whom all blessings are stored up. There are glorious promises given you, a glorious hereafter before you, a glorious brotherhood of saints and angels awaiting you in the bright land of the redeemed, and an inexpressibly glorious Lord to see, to love, and to adore. Oh, then, be not your own destroyers! Cast in your lot with the loyal subjects and faithful servants of Christ. Take His yoke upon you and learn of Him, and this rest, this never-ending rest and peace and glory shall most certainly be yours.

DISCOURSE III.

PSALM II. 4.

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision."

IN the verses considered in my last discourse, we saw the opposition that Christ's kingdom had to encounter on its first appearance in the world. We saw the still greater opposition that Satan stirred up against it under the name and guise of Christianity when Popery had spread her sable wings over the length and breadth of Christendom; and we saw the greatest opposition of all that Satan still continues to throw in its way, in the natural heart of man.

All this opposition and rebellion to the legitimate sway of Christ as a king is most graphically described by the Holy Ghost in the first three verses of this Psalm.

In the verse that I have read to you for our consideration to-day, a different scene is presented to our view. We have hitherto been, as it were, mingling with the noise, tumult, and confusion of the boisterous multitude, the lawless rabble, and their designing but infatuated leaders. We have been amongst the subjects of Satan, and seen their bloody violence and ceaseless restlessness surging and heaving like the troubled sea. Such is the scene that we have just passed by.

From this scene of confusion, din, and uproar on the earth, the inspired penman now directs our attention to a scene of quietness and unruffled composure in heaven. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." Contrast that word "sitteth" with the hurrying to and fro, the tumult and bustle that we have just witnessed. What a calm breaks in upon us all at once after the storm that we have passed through! What majestic serenity is there here! "The kings of the *earth* stand up." They are so intent on their rebellion, they *stand up;* but He that is in the *heavens sitteth.* All the nations of the earth, with their kings, princes, and potentates, rage, roar, and foam, in their anger; but He that is in the heavens sitteth still. He is not moved by all their threats and vociferations. He looks down, calm and undisturbed, on their surging masses. He hears all their protestations, and sees all their preparations to throw off His yoke, to break His bands asunder, and cast away His cords; but He does not rise up to defend His right. He "sitteth," as if the nations of the earth were the loyalest subjects in all His universe.

But observe, that although He sits still, He is not an unconcerned spectator. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall *laugh;* the Lord shall have them in *derision.*" He regards all their machinations, and He laughs at them. He derides their silly bluster, their puny efforts, and their vain designs.

I need hardly say that the Psalmist, in thus speaking of God, speaks after the manner of man. God never laughs, but He often punishes men in such a way as might well excite the Divine laughter, were God such

a one as man is.* In Ps. xxxvii. 12, 13, we read thus: —"The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth; the Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming." God may be said to laugh at bad men when their wicked devices are not only frustrated, but fall on their own heads. They are not subjects so worthy of the Divine laughter when they are only unsuccessful in their malicious designs against the good, as when God has made themselves to fall into the midst of the pit that they have digged for others, or caused their very opposition to further the cause that it was designed to destroy.

Let us inquire, therefore, whether the rage of the nations against the cause of Christ was so overruled by the good providence of God as to help that cause instead of weakening it.

You may be sure, brethren, that when the Jews had crucified our Divine Lord, they believed that they had cut at the very root of the strange doctrine that was spreading among them. Nor can I help thinking that even Satan himself was of opinion that his cause had triumphed when he saw the Lord of life and glory expire on the cross of Calvary. If he had foreseen the issue, you may be sure he never would have urged the infuriated Jews to clamour for Christ's death. The crucifixion of the Son of God is to me a satisfactory proof that Satan's foreknowledge, in certain matters, at least, is as limited as our own. No being could have been more divided against himself

* "Deus ridere dicitur, cum multis signis demonstrat, illos *risu* divino esse dignos, et jure meritissimo ob stultitiam actionum illudi." (Venema *in loc.*)

than Satan was when he prompted Pontius Pilate to sign the death warrant of Jesus Christ. No potentate has ever laboured so energetically, and with so good a will, for the overthrow of his own kingdom.

And, brethren, what comfort may not believers derive from such a fact and such a reflection as this! God is able to cause to work for our best good not only the designs and acts of bad men, but all the plots and schemes of Satan also. Job's temptations and trials were the greatest blessing that ever befel him. All his prosperity and influence, all the comforts and happiness of his once flourishing household, were far inferior, in the scale of blessings, to his ruined home, his afflicted body, and his alienated friends. Satan had done his worst. "He is in thy hands," said God; "only spare his life." Job was given up to Satan's tender mercies. He was therefore an example to all succeeding ages of the extent of Satan's malice and power to hurt. Many fretful expressions, indeed, dropped from Job's lips, and no wonder; but still he "preserved his integrity." "He sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." God would just show him, and show the world after him, that even when the devil has done his worst, he cannot overcome, or even harm, the good man who has God for his strength. Nay, He would show him that the devil's greatest rage is ever made subservient to the interests of God's children. Think you, had not Job a greater experimental knowledge of God after his afflictions than he had had before them? He had only "heard of Him by the hearing of the ear," till the dispensation of his trial was overpast; "but now," he says, "mine eye seeth thee, and I abhor myself

and repent in dust and ashes." All the devil's labours, therefore, resulted in enabling Job to see God; and, as a consequence, to see himself as a vile sinner before Him. Surely such a sight as this was cheaply purchased by all the afflictions and bereavements he had undergone. He had before, indeed, "feared God and eschewed evil," but he had never got a real sight of God till now. Brethren, the affliction that gives us a clearer sight of God and of ourselves is a sanctified affliction; and such an affliction ought to give us this additional comfort, that as God has made the effects of sin, and the devices of Satan, work for our spiritual good, so He has given us a direct proof that He is on our side. Every nearer and clearer view that we get of God, no matter what dispensation of His Providence gives it to us, is a clear testimony that God is for us, and ought ever to be regarded as such by the Christian.

God, then, may well be said to have laughed at the rebellious Jews, and their diabolical leader, when He made use of their own means to frustrate their own ends by raising up Jesus again from the dead. The death of Christ thus became the life of the cause which they had endeavoured to destroy by putting Him to death. I say *thus* became, for the death of Christ could not of itself have injured the interests of Satan. Nay, had that been the end—had Jesus been held by the fetters of death—had He not risen again, then the devil would have had effected exactly what he had designed. Satan often goes a long way in working out good for God's people; but I am inclined to believe that he is rarely, if ever, made instrumental in doing the *whole* work. He is generally

permitted to bring it to that point where its real character must be discovered—where it must turn finally to either right or left. If the work have reference to the wicked he is permitted indeed to carry it on as he began; but if it be connected with the people of God, then God takes it out of Satan's hands just at the turning point, and makes evident the character that all along belonged to it. No slave of Africa ever toiled and carried burdens for a foreign master as Satan does for God. And the best of it is he invariably thinks that he is toiling for himself, he always imagines that he is slaving for his own interests, and carrying his burdens to his own lair; until God gives the turn to his affairs, and shows him that he has been all along fighting, and struggling, and watching, and plotting, and laying schemes to his own hurt. Thus God sits in the heavens and laughs at the plans, devices, and machinations of Satan and his subjects. When Jesus hung in agonies on the cross; when He bowed His head and gave up the ghost; when He was laid in the cold tomb, and as long as death held Him under its dominion, there was, no doubt, great exultation among the powers of darkness. Satan enjoyed a triumph such as the denizens of hell had never witnessed before. He returned as a mighty conqueror amid the vociferations, yells, and shoutings of his ribald crew, and the infernal regions were moved from their very centre at his coming. All thought, and he thought himself, that he had done his work well. And, indeed, so he had. He had done the very thing which God by His counsel and foreknowledge had determined before should be done. He had been very prominently instrumental in working out the salvation of the human race. For recollect that the

crucifixion and death of our blessed Lord was the devil's work as well as God's work. It was the devil's work as far as the designs of malice, hatred, and bloodthirstiness were concerned in it; but it was God's work in reference to His own eternal counsels. God gave Satan leave to proceed just as far as would be conducive to the good of His own people, and when Satan had arrived at that point, God said, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." He gave him loose reins until He had crucified His Son and kept Him three days in the grave, and then He said, "Thy work is done, O Satan," and reined him in again.

Now, recollect, brethren, that Satan has no more power over the weakest believer in Christ than he had over Christ himself. He has his bounds that he cannot pass in all the dealings of his implacable hatred with every child of God. He may persecute you to the death, or at least he may cause you continual annoyance by means of temptations—by suggesting desponding thoughts of yourselves, or hard thoughts of God; but all this shall be overruled for your good. Do not despair or despond; Satan cannot harm you. On the contrary, he is doing you good every day of your lives: he is making it necessary for you to live nearer to God. All his temptations and snares are only the barking of the wolf, that causes the lambs to nestle more closely in the fold. Whatever makes you live nearer to God *must be* a blessing. The very end of your existence is to know God and enjoy Him for ever. Your greatest happiness is to know Him. It is life eternal to know Him. But you never can know Him, as long as you are strangers to Him. Strangers do not know each

other; you make *acquaintance* first, and *know* afterwards. But it is the temptations, plots, and snares of sin and Satan that make you acquainted with God. You find that you cannot contend with your powerful enemies so long as you rely on your own strength; and therefore you are forced to apply to God for assistance. Now, this applying to God makes you acquainted with Him, and your acquaintance with Him makes you know Him, and to know Him, as has been already said, is your highest happiness. To know Him is the highest happiness of the highest archangel.

Of course, Satan does not tempt and harass you for this purpose, more than he urged the Jews to crucify our Lord in order that an atonement might be made for the sins of fallen man. He aims at your misery; but God so overrules his machinations, that instead of resulting in your misery, they take quite the contrary direction, and end in your happiness. All things, you are aware, *must* work together for good to them that love God. All things—not only men, but devils also, must work and toil, and work *together*, too, like oxen in a yoke, for good for God's people. And no wonder that hell as well as earth should be made subservient to the Christian's interests. You recollect the Apostle tells us that it is for the Church that Christ is head over all things (Eph. i. 22); head not only over heaven and earth, but over hell also. All the powers in hell, earth, or heaven are under His control, and are working together under His direction for His people's good. Whether it be poverty or riches, health or sickness, fame or obscurity, that falls to the

believer's lot, it is all of Christ's sending, for He is controlling all things for the good of His own people; or whether the Holy Spirit be shed largely or sparingly from heaven into the believer's heart, it is all of Christ's sending, for grace is given to every one according to the measure of His gift (Eph. iv. 7); and whether in His infinite wisdom He bestows spiritual blessings liberally or by small measure, it is all for the good of His Church. Or whether Satan be permitted to tempt and harass the Christian, as he did Job, or be more restrained in his operations, it is all of Christ's permission; for He is head over Satan, as well as all things else, for the interests of His people. No matter what befals the Christian, it is, it *must be* for his good. It is as impossible that anything really evil should befal him, as that Christ should be overcome of Satan; Christ is over all things for his good, and, therefore, for his good all things must necessarily work.

But again, if God may be said to have laughed at His Son's enemies and His own, by making their devices work their own confusion, when He raised up Jesus from the dead, he may also be said to have laughed at them in all that followed on that resurrection, as arising from it. When, after an interval of forty days, our blessed Lord ascended on high, we are told that He led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. Now, in those gifts that He received for men after His ascension into heaven, lay the great strength of His cause. But if He had never died, He could never have risen and ascended, and consequently, captivity could never have been led captive. If the Jews had never put Him to death, those gifts could never have been received for men, and, consequently,

Christianity must have dwindled and died away. Here, then, brethren, we have Satan and his subjects falling into the midst of the pit that they had digged for others. He who had the power of death is overcome, and has lost his power by the very death which he has compassed.

When, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost was poured out on the multitudes assembled at Jerusalem, then the foundation of Christ's kingdom was laid, and henceforward the nations of the world resisted His sovereignty in vain. There was something in that first outpouring of the Holy Ghost, which might have struck awe and terror into the hearts of those men who had clamoured for the blood of Jesus of Nazareth. The fact of so many speaking with tongues that they had never learned, must surely have convinced them, if they had only listened to their own convictions, that the cause of Him whom they had crucified was the cause of God Himself. How they must have ground their teeth in frantic and useless rage, when they reflected that such numbers would return from Jerusalem to their own homes, in almost every country under the sun, and spread the report of the miracle which they themselves had witnessed! They would at once perceive that nothing could be more calculated to extend the cause which they had laboured and were still labouring so ardently to repress. Then the rumours of the miracles wrought by the apostles in the name of Jesus of Nazareth—the very Jesus whom they themselves had crucified—must have stung them to the quick day after day.

Far better, brethren, to have provoked God's frown, than His laughter. When God laughs, man must weep, and, alas, must weep in vain.

By the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, therefore, on the day of Pentecost, and in the primitive ages of Christianity, God may be said to have laughed at the enemies of His Son's Gospel. It showed that the cause was God's cause, and that whoever fought against it fought against Him. And it does appear a marvellous thing that, after all the signs and tokens of God's presence with the early Christians, men should have still continued not only to refuse the claims of the Gospel, but even to fight against it, and endeavour to check its progress by every means in their power. We can account for this astonishing fact on one supposition only; namely, that those men were led captive by Satan at his will—that they had no will but his.

But we must not forget that it was not in the gift of tongues and power of working miracles, which were conferred on the apostles and early Christians, that the great strength of the cause of Christ lay. These outward manifestations of God's presence were only designed for signs and tokens to the world that the Christian cause was God's cause. They were merely the fences which the Holy Ghost placed round His vineyard, to convince those who were *without* that it *was* the vineyard of the Lord's planting. Now, walls and fences may protect the vineyard, and show to whom the vineyard belongs, but they cannot make one branch grow or one bud shoot forth. If there be not something more than walls and fences, every vine, branch, leaf, and bud within the boundaries of the enclosure must soon droop, and wither, and die. The vines must be watered, the sap must get into the roots, and pass up through the stems and boughs, or they shall be walled and fenced in vain.

I say, therefore, that the gift of tongues and power of working miracles were rather designed to silence the gainsayers and confound the enemies of Christianity, than to establish the faith of Christians themselves. It is, and ever has been, on the graces of the Spirit, and not on His gifts, that the life, prosperity, and power of Christianity depend. Miracles may convince, but they cannot convert. They may prove to a man that the cause is God's cause, but they cannot make him a new creature. True, they have been sometimes made instrumental, like any other startling dispensation of the Almighty, in bringing men from darkness to light; but miracles have, of themselves, no life-giving power. They may make men believers as the devils are believers, but they never did and never can confer a faith that worketh by love.

Gifts without graces are clothing without food. Hence, when our Divine Lord was leaving the world, it was not a miracle-working Spirit that he promised to send to His disciples, but one who should be a Comforter; not one who would confound the world by displays of power, but one who would soothe, comfort, and support Christians themselves under their persecutions, trials, and sufferings. As Christ Himself was the great promise under the old dispensation, so the Holy Ghost, *as a Comforter*, is the great promise under the new. This is the promise on which the Church hangs all her hopes, from which she derives all her strength, and on the fulfilment of which has ever depended, and ever shall depend, her very existence.

I conceive, therefore, brethren, that God may in no other instance be more emphatically said to have laughed

at the enemies and opposers of the Gospel than when He sent the Holy Ghost as a *grace-giving* Spirit into the world. This was giving the cause of His Anointed a new strength, that man, and perhaps Satan, had never dreamt of. This was the great gift for men that followed on that death which Satan and his subjects had so anxiously hastened; and thus He who sat in the heavens laughed at them; thus the Lord had them in derision.

You are aware that the work of defending, strengthening, and extending the Gospel cause in the world is the Holy Ghost's work. You recollect how He speaks in one place of that cause as His own peculiar care. "Separate me Barnabas and Saul," He says, "for the work whereunto I have called them." (Acts xiii. 2.) The Holy Ghost had a certain work to do, and He chose His men. He knew who were best fitted for the particular business that He wanted done. None would suit His purpose but Barnabas and Saul. "Separate *them*," He says; "separate them for *me:* I have work to do; and they can best do it." (Acts x.)

The Holy Ghost is, therefore, the great worker in the Gospel field—the great assailant of the usurped sovereignty of Satan. It is by His operation as a life-giving Spirit that all antichristian devices are laughed to scorn. It is He that produces that change in the human heart which He Himself calls a *being born again;* a change which brings faithful, fearless, devoted champions to Christ's ranks; champions, of whom a small one can chase a thousand of their enemies; champions, who never tire fighting for Christ, or against Satan; champions, who have already assailed the lion in his lair in many a corner of our

globe, and, at the forfeiture of their own heart's blood, torn the prey from the mighty. "Separate them," the Holy Ghost cries; "separate them to me!" and they go out in their serried ranks, these armour-clad warriors, to conquer or die. No compromise, no truce-making, no striking of hands! "Slay, or be slain!" is their watch-word, as they rush on to the charge; and Satan trembles as the clangour-notes of their Gospel trumpet resound round his fortresses. These were they who drove him out of his strongholds of heathenism, and set a Christian on the throne of the Roman world. These were they who undermined his foundations, and overthrew his battlements, when he had entrenched himself, so seemingly secure, behind the grizzly front of Popery. And these are they who shall pursue him yet, a mighty fugitive, his bulwarks levelled, his forces scattered, and his power gone; until, as a prisoner of war, he shall be borne in chains to his bottomless prison.

Then shall the kingdom be given to the saints of the Most High, and they shall possess it for ever and ever.

DISCOURSE IV.

PSALM II. 4.

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."

IN my last discourse from these words I mentioned the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, and the gift of tongues that followed the effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, as signs and tokens of the derision in which God held all opposition to the Gospel cause on its first appearance in the world. We saw, however, that the gift of tongues and the power of working miracles were not the life and strength of Christianity—that it was on the graces, and not on the gifts, of the Spirit of God, that the religion of Jesus principally depended for support and success.

As this is a subject of very great importance, and one in which every Christian has the deepest personal concern, I have thought it well to make some further observations on it to-day, and enter a little more into particulars. My aim shall be to show you that it has been by the graces of the Holy Ghost, or, in other words, by what is called *experimental* religion in the heart, that God has ever laughed at all the malicious designs of men and Satan against the spread of the Gospel.

A certain infidel is reported to have said that if God

had made a revelation to man he would have written it on the skies in letters of flame. The infidel thought, no doubt, that if men could look up every day of their lives, and see the great truths of the Bible written in bright shining characters on the clear blue firmament, a revelation would thus accomplish what he deemed its mission, and all men would be believers. And thus far he was right. Men would in that case have no more thought of doubting the truth of what they read than they have now of doubting the existence of the sun, moon, and stars. But, nevertheless, I hold that a revelation so startlingly made would not have been one whit more efficacious in bringing men to God than that which has been already made by prophets, evangelists, and apostles. I say *in bringing men to God,* for it would have carried conviction to millions of hearts which are now unconvinced; but conviction is not a bringing to God. There would have been required the very same instrumentality then as there is now in rescuing mankind from perdition—namely, the operation of the Holy Ghost on the heart.

Nay, we will suppose the infidel to have made even a stronger assertion than this: we will suppose him to have said that if God had made a revelation to man, He would not only have written it on the skies, but would also have kept before the eyes of the human race continually the joys of heaven which were promised to the good on the one hand, and the horrors of hell which were threatened to the wicked on the other; and we will reply that, even if God had done all this, the very same agency would have been still required in saving men's souls as is required now. Not all the revelation of God's will

flaming from the skies—not all the joys of heaven on the one hand, or the woes of hell on the other, could have ever restored to a single son or daughter of our race the image that was lost in Adam. These things would, I admit, have overwhelmed us at the first with wonder and amazement; but we should soon have become accustomed to them as we are now accustomed to the rising and setting of the sun, and have ceased to wonder. Things would soon have returned to their old course after the excitement was over, and that which was born of the flesh would have been flesh still.

If you turn to the fourteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you will find an instance of the inefficacy of miracles on man's natural heart, when those miracles are unaccompanied by the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. The people of Lystra were so far favoured by heaven that they had a miracle wrought in their own city —that of healing a man who had been a cripple from his mother's womb. Now, that miracle had the very effect on the Lystrians that I have said a revelation written on the skies would have had on the human race—it excited their wonder and amazement. "Thy gods are come down to us in the likeness of men," they exclaimed, and could scarcely be restrained from doing sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas. (Ver. 18.)

But now read the very next verse. "And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people; and having *stoned* Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead." Here, then, we have what a miracle can effect when the Spirit of God does not accompany it. The Lystrians sacrifice to

Paul as a god, and the next hour stone him as a malefactor.

And thus it would be, you need not doubt, even if the revelation of God's will were written in the skies. There would be a hurrying to and fro, as there was at Lystra, over the whole face of our globe. Men would bring oxen and garlands, and offer every sacrifice that they thought would be acceptable to the God who had thus wondrously made known his will to his creatures. But soon there would come, not men from Antioch and Iconium, but Satan and his legions from hell, and persuade men, either that those letters came there by chance, or that if God placed them there He only did so to frighten or cajole poor mortals and make them His slaves; and it would soon come to pass that instead of offering Him sacrifice, and learning His will and doing it, some of them would revile Him as a tyrant, and others even doubt His very existence.

Or, if we consider that very miracle to which I have already alluded—namely, the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost, we shall find, that although it was most highly calculated to confound the enemies of Jesus, yet it did not *of itself* convert one single soul. What is the account handed down to us of the effect produced on the multitudes when the story of the sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and the appearance of tongues of flame resting on each one of the Christian assembly, had been noised abroad? We are told, "the people were confounded;" "they were amazed;" "they marvelled," and "were in doubt saying, What meaneth this?" Here you have *doubt, wonder,* and *amazement,* the natural effects of a miracle, and I hold the only effects which a

miracle can produce. It arrests men's attention; it sets them inquiring; it wins, or at least may win, their assent to any doctrine which the workers of the miracle may be pleased to teach. But it can go no farther than this. When it has excited men's wonder, and arrested their attention, and convinced their judgment, it has done all it can do, and, indeed, all that it was intended to do—it has fulfilled its mission.

But observe, when Peter has preached to those multitudes, the difference between the effect of a miracle, and that of the faithful preaching of the Word, "When they heard this," says the historian, "they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts ii. 37.) They were "confounded" and "amazed" by the miracle, but they were "pricked in their heart," by Peter's preaching. When they had witnessed the miracle, they asked, "What meaneth *this?*" but when they had heard Peter's address, their inquiry was, "Men and brethren, what shall *we* do?" In the one case, the whole affair seemed something very astonishing, and worthy of an investigation; in the other it became a personal concern, and the inquiry turned from the miracle to the individuals themselves; it is no longer, "What meaneth *it?*" but "What shall *we* do?" And herein, I conceive, lies the whole difference between the effect which well-authenticated miracles must ever produce on men's minds, and that which is produced by the Holy Ghost accompanying the preaching or reading of the Word.

You recollect, the apostle calls the Word of God the "*sword* of the Spirit." (Eph. vi. 17.) Now, the sword

is the instrument which He uses when He overcomes that natural stubbornness of the human heart which no other instrumentality ever has, or ever can, overcome. It was this instrument that He used on the present occasion. He first wrought a miracle to draw men's attention, and then He spoke by the mouth of Peter; that is, He drew the sword which is "quick, powerful, and sharp, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow."

No wonder the multitudes were pricked to the heart when this sharp sword was brought to bear upon them by an arm of such power and skill. No wonder they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and gladly received the word, when they were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Ever remember, dear friends, that nothing can *excite* human nature from the sleep of death in which it is lying, but a wound made by the sword of the Spirit of God. The thunder of Sinai could not do it; the sleep of the dead was too deep for its loudest peal. The walking on the sea, and the raising of Lazarus could not do it; Judas slept on, though the voice of such works as these resounded in his ears day after day. Lydia attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul, because the Lord, the Holy Ghost, opened her heart to do so. Those of Iconium, who heard Paul and Barnabas preach, were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; but it was only as many as were ordained, or rather disposed by the Holy Ghost, to eternal life, that believed.* Judas, who saw his Master's miracles

* "And as many as were disposed, adapted, or in a right disposition and preparation for eternal life, believed. The expression

and heard his Master's teaching; who was more highly favoured, as far as outward means of grace were concerned, than any other son or daughter of Adam's race ever was, or ever can be, except the eleven, his companions, was, after all, "the son of perdition;" while thousands on thousands who never saw a miracle wrought, and on whose belief the history of miracles exerted little or no influence, are now in heaven. So true it is, that all outward means of grace, and miracles in the number, are efficacious or otherwise in saving men's souls, just as the Holy Ghost is pleased to apply them. He is the great worker in the Gospel field, and it is His exclusive province to give life, energy, and increase to the cause of Christ in the world. He supplies it with that innate principle, by which it not only survives reproaches and persecutions, but spreads and increases the more, the more it suffers. The world and the devil are ignorant how to grapple with this power which the Holy Ghost gives to Christianity; they are like the Philistines with Samson, they know not where its great strength lies; and thus it is that He who sits in the heavens laughs at their vain designs against Himself, and against His Anointed.

does not seem to have any reference to the *Divine predestination* of particular men to salvation, even in the *Lutheran*, much less in the *Calvinistic* sense of that term."—*Parkhurst.* There does, indeed, seem to be no direct reference to "Divine predestination;" but, if all "holy desires and good counsels proceed from God," the doctrine of *preventing grace*, at least, is necessarily involved in the expression, no matter how it is explained. The Ethiopic version of this place is very peculiar—"They rejoiced and glorified God who had imparted to them (*impertivisset—Walton*) eternal life."

And recollect, that the Holy Ghost carries on this great work in the world, and against the world, by the effusion of those very graces which the world in general despises. "The fruit of the Spirit," says St. Paul, "is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Gal. v. 22.) Now, these are they which overcome the world. "This is the victory that overcometh the world," says St. John, "even our faith." If faith, therefore, which is only one of the fruits of the Spirit, overcome the world, how much more shall they all when united. Why, when all those fruits are united, we not only overcome, we are more than conquerors. There is no struggle, so to speak. We "come, see, conquer," like the warrior of old. The devil and the world yield immediately, when they see such a formidable host arrayed against them. They know there is no chance of success; so they fly at once, as a matter of necessity. Believe it, the surest way to have no fighting, is to make it plain that we are well prepared to fight. The best guarantee of peace, is to be evidently ready for war. Our own beloved country has not been invaded for many a day, and you may be sure that she has herself to thank for it. Had she neglected her fleets and her armies, her friends would have felt a great tendency to find fault with things with which they are now, as they ought to be, very well satisfied. Many little matters would, in all probability, have been considered a sufficient pretext for a quarrel which have been now passed by unnoticed; you all know the fable of the Wolf and the Lamb, and therefore know that innocence of itself is sometimes no protection.

Now, brethren, let us be as wise in spiritual things, as

our rulers are wise in political. Let us be always prepared for an enemy, and for any enemy, and for all enemies together, whenever they like to come. Recollect, too, that the foes we have to guard against, will not think it necessary to make a pretext for war. They will waste no time in diplomacy. They will ask for no explanations. They will watch their opportunity, and as soon as ever they have a chance, they will pounce upon us without the slightest ceremony. It is necessary, therefore, not only to have our armour ready, but also to have it on. The Christian cannot afford to be so luxurious in his way of living, as to lay his armour off, and sleep beside it. He must sleep armour-clad, or rather he must not sleep at all; he must be ever on sentry, fully equipped from top to toe.

In glancing over those fruits of the Spirit, you will, I think, have no difficulty in discovering the secret of the great strength of the Christian cause. How is it possible for Satan and the world to contend successfully where they have such opponents to encounter? Take, for instance, *joy* and *peace*. What harm can you do a man as long as you do not deprive him of peace and joy? But this is a peace of which you *cannot* deprive him; for it is a peace which the world can neither give nor take away. Nor can you deprive him of his joy; for they who have received the Word have received it with *joy* in the Holy Ghost, even when accompanied with much affliction. (1 Thes. i. 6.) In their case affliction and joy can become united like twin sisters; they can kiss each other like righteousness and peace. Now what can the devil and the world do to the Christian more than afflict him? They may slander his good name, and cause him many annoyances; they

may tempt him; they may persecute him; and these are afflictions. What then? Afflicted he may be, but yet he has what they can never have. The father of lies is like the "father of a fool;" he "hath no joy," and his children are like Israel's rebellious sons; "God hath taken from them the joy of their glory;" to them "all joy is darkened." But the Christian, though afflicted, is joyful still; ay, though much afflicted, he has joy of the Holy Ghost. (1 Thess. i. 6.) *Much* afflicted! Mark that word; we are all deeply concerned in it. There is not a Christian on earth, and never has been one, who has escaped afflictions. *We* are not indeed called on to suffer persecutions for professing Christianity, as the early Christians were; but afflictions we must look for as long as we are in the world. It is through much tribulation that we must enter the kingdom of heaven. And if you reflect for a moment on who the Christian is, you will see that afflictions are as necessary to him as a Christian, as food and clothing are necessary to him as a man. Being a child of God, God naturally loves him; and whom God loves we know He chastens. There are two suppositions on which you can explain why you are not afflicted. One is a very awful one; namely, that God loves you not—that you are bastards, and not sons. Thus the very absence of affliction from your lives ought to be your greatest affliction. Better surely to be chastened every day and every hour because you are sons, than to be spared because you are bastards. The other supposition is, that you have reached perfection, and therefore need no chastisement. Chastisement supposes offence, and, where there is no offence, there ought to be no chastisement. Consequently, to

murmur at affliction is to say that we have not sinned, or to deny our own sonship; it is to claim the exemption of bastards, or to assert that God is unjust.

I hold, therefore, that all Christians, no matter what their rank, wealth, or position may be, must pass through affliction. It is the highway to heaven, and there is no by-way—no smooth, green path, strewn with flowers and roses. It is an up-hill, rough, and thorny road, and no pilgrim has ever reached the end of it without wearied limbs and bleeding feet. There is no royal road to heaven, as there is none to knowledge. The path which is beaten by the beggar must be beaten by the monarch. Christ Himself, who has gone before, trod the path of suffering; and the path which He trod must be trodden by all who follow Him. They who walk in the footsteps of Him who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, must also learn what grief and sorrow mean. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" is a part of the legacy left to all Christ's disciples. But the Christian is joyful in the midst of all his afflictions. "He rejoices in hope," and therefore he is "patient in tribulation." (Rom. xii. 12.) Hope carries him through all the annoyances that men or Satan can stir up against him; and this is a hope in which he abounds through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Rom. xv. 13.) So true it is that the whole work of grace on earth—the whole work by which God laughs at the vain designs of men and Satan—is carried on by the Holy Ghost's direct agency.

As an example of the support, comfort, and joy which this Divine Spirit has vouchsafed to the servants of Jesus in all ages, by which, when men and devils have done

their worst, they are laughed to scorn, I will read you a part of the account which the Church at Smyrna has left on record of the martyrdom of Polycarp, their second Bishop. After having detailed the particulars of his seizure by the soldiers, the account proceeds thus :—

"When he was brought to the tribunal, there was a great tumult, as soon as it was generally understood that Polycarp was apprehended. The proconsul asked him if he was Polycarp, to which he assented. The former then began to exhort him—'Have pity on thy own great age, and the like. Swear by the fortunes of Cæsar. Repent. Say, Take away the atheists.' Polycarp, with a grave aspect, beholding all the multitude, waving his hand to them, and looking up to heaven, said, 'Take away the atheists.' The proconsul urging him, and saying, 'Swear, and I will release thee; reproach Christ,' Polycarp said, 'Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He hath never wronged me; and how can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me?' The proconsul still urging, 'Swear by the fortune of Cæsar,' Polycarp said, 'If you still vainly contend to make me swear by the fortune of Cæsar, as you speak, affecting an ignorance of my real character, hear me declaring frankly what I am. I am a Christian; and if you desire to learn the Christian doctrine, assign me a day, and hear.' The proconsul said, 'Persuade the people.' Polycarp said, 'I have thought proper to address you; for we are taught to pay all honour to magistrates and powers appointed by God which is consistent with a good conscience. But I do not hold them worthy that I should apologize before them.' 'I have wild beasts,' says the proconsul; 'I will expose you to them unless you repent.' 'Call them,' replies the martyr; 'our minds are not to be changed from the better to the worse, but it is a good thing to be changed from evil to good.' 'I will tame your spirit by fire,' says the other, 'since you despise the wild beast, unless you repent.' 'You threaten me with fire,' answers Polycarp, 'which burns for a moment and will soon be extinct; but you are ignorant of the future judgment, and of the fire of eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly. But why do you delay? Do what you please.' Saying

this and more, he was filled with confidence, and joy and grace shone in his countenance; so that he was far from being confounded by the menaces. On the contrary, the proconsul was visibly embarrassed; he sent, however, the herald to proclaim thrice in the midst of the assembly, 'Polycarp hath professed himself a Christian.' Upon this, all the multitude both of Gentiles and of Jews who dwelt at Smyrna, with insatiate rage shouted aloud, 'This is the doctor of Asia, the father of Christians, the subverter of our gods, who hath taught many not to sacrifice nor to adore.' They now begged Philip the Asiarch to let out a lion against Polycarp. But he refused, observing that the amphitheatrical spectacles of the wild beasts were finished. They then unanimously shouted that he should be burnt alive, for his vision was of necessity to be accomplished. Whilst he was praying he observed the fire kindling, and turning to the faithful that were with him, he said prophetically, 'I must be burnt alive.' The business was executed with all possible speed; for the people immediately gathered fuel from the workshops and baths, in which employment the Jews distinguished themselves with their usual malice. As soon as the fire was prepared, stripping off his clothes and loosing his girdle he attempted to take off his shoes—a thing unusual for him to do formerly, because each of the faithful was wont to strive who should be most assiduous in serving him. For, before his martyrdom, his integrity and blameless conduct had always procured him the most unfeigned respect. Immediately the usual appendages of burning were placed about him, and when they were going to fasten him to the stake, he said, 'Let me remain as I am, for He who giveth me strength to sustain the fire will enable me also, without your securing me with nails, to remain unmoved in the fire!' Upon which they bound him without nailing him. And he putting his hands behind him and being bound as a distinguished ram selected from a great flock, a burnt-offering acceptable to God Almighty, said, 'O Father of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have attained the knowledge of Thee, O God of angels, and principalities, and of all creation, and of all the just who live in thy sight, I bless Thee that Thou hast counted me worthy of this day and this hour to receive my portion in the number of martyrs, in the cup of Christ, for the

resurrection to eternal life both of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost; among whom may I be received before Thee this day as a sacrifice well favoured and acceptable, which Thou the faithful and true God hast prepared, promised beforehand, and fulfilled accordingly. Wherefore I praise Thee for all these things; I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, by the eternal High-Priest Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son; through whom, with Him in the Holy Spirit, be glory to Thee both now and for ever. Amen.'" *

Then the officers, we are told, lighted the fire, and the work was quickly consummated: Polycarp was soon beyond the reach of his enemies.

I have given you this long account of the death of one of the early martyrs because I think it illustrates in a remarkable way the subject under our consideration. Here Jews and Gentiles were united; men and devils did their worst; but Polycarp was more than conqueror over them all. He rejoiced, and thanked, and praised God for having brought him to that hour. The greatest affliction that earth or hell could devise was before him; but he met it with joy! When men and Satan did all that they could do, and all that they can ever have the power to do, they only conferred on Polycarp the martyr's crown, hastened his journey to heaven, and strengthened, instead of weakening, the cause which they meant to destroy. Thus He who sat in the heavens laughed at them, thus the Lord had them in derision.

I am sure enough has been said to convince you of the necessity—may I not say the overwhelming necessity?—of seeking the gift of this living, energizing Spirit. And

* Milner's Church History, Century II., chapter v.

thanks be to our good and merciful Father, there is no promise more full and explicit in the whole Bible than that which offers the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Pray, then, that this Spirit may dwell with you, and be in you, giving you life, and light, and love, filling you with all hope, and peace, and joy in believing, and making you Christians indeed. Remember that if you have not this Spirit dwelling in you, you have no life; and if you have no life here, how can you hope to have life hereafter? Be warned, therefore, in time. Claim the Great Promise to-day. To-morrow is not yours.

DISCOURSE V.

PSALM II. 5.

"Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."

WE have already considered in what manner and by what means He that sitteth in the heavens laughs and holds in derision His Son's enemies. To-day the scene changes from derision to punishment. God has shown those rebels the vanity of their designs and the fruitlessness of their rage, and now He turns His hand against themselves. He shows them that they have embarked on a voyage not only foolish and unprofitable, but also full of danger, and to eventuate in suffering and destruction.

It is somewhat singular that God is never said to laugh at His creatures except at those times when ruin and destruction are impending over their heads. "He shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming," says the Psalmist in another place. (Ps. xxxvii. 13.) "He laughs at their calamity, and mocks when their fear cometh," says Solomon. (Prov. i. 28.) Thus, whenever you are told that the Lord laughs at men, you may safely add the words of the Psalm, "Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." The latter follows the former almost, if

not altogether, in the way of necessity. The reason of this is, that God never laughs except at His enemies, those who have set themselves in direct opposition to Himself and His cause, and therefore those whom it is necessary for Him to destroy. To the enemies of God destruction is as inevitable as it is just.

When God is said to speak in wrath the meaning is, that He will afflict in wrath. It is by the dispensations of His providence that God speaks to men. He speaks by judgments or He speaks by mercies; and it is thus that He is said to speak in love or in anger.*

When God speaks in wrath, His meaning is perhaps more generally comprehended than when He speaks in love. The witness that He affords of himself when He "doeth good and gives us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness," is not usually so clearly understood as that of His "four sore judgments, the sword, the famine, the noisome beast, and the pestilence." But it must be also admitted that even when God speaks in wrath His meaning is far from being invariably understood. Men are often like Solomon's drunkard, "God hath stricken them, and they were not sick; he hath beaten them, and they felt it not." (Prov. xxiii. 35.) "God speaketh once, yea,

* Hengstenberg denies that there is any allusion in this place to God's speaking by deeds. "He affrights them with the succeeding words," he says, "not the reverse. The actual punishment of the revolters, who even to this day have got no farther than the speech, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us,' lies beyond the compass of this Psalm." (*Commentary on the Psalms, Clark's For. Theol. Lib.*) It is not easy to see why God should utter the "succeeding

twice (in His anger), yet they perceive it not." (Job xxxiii. 14.) Or if they *are* sick, if they *have* felt the stroke, if they *do* perceive it when God speaks, they are often inclined to regard afflictions and bereavements, those utterances of God's anger, rather as trials of their faith than as punishments for their offences. They are disposed to take "the perfect and upright man who feared God and eschewed evil," and who "would not remove his integrity from him," as the example of their sufferings, rather than him who bowed in silence before the cursing Shimei, knowing that the Lord had said unto him, "Curse David." (2 Sam. xvi. 10.)

When the Psalmist adds, "And vex them in his sore displeasure," the words are no more than a repetition of what he had already stated when he said that God would speak unto them in His wrath. It is a usual thing in Hebrew poetry for the line which succeeds another to correspond with that other in meaning, so that the two lines, or couplets, are only different forms of expressing one and the same truth. Thus, when Isaiah says, "My soul shall be joyful in my God," he only repeats what he has said in the preceding sentence, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord." (lxi. 10.) And, again, when it is said, "I will pour waters upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground," the very same promise is repeated in the words that follow, namely, "I will pour my Spirit

words," namely, "Yet I have set my King, on my holy hill of Zion," in *wrath* and *sore displeasure.* He might as well be said to have sent, in wrath and sore displeasure, the angels to proclaim, "on earth peace, good-will towards men." Wrath must, indeed, follow the rejection of Christ; but Christ's sovereignty is never proclaimed in wrath.

upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." * (Isa. xliv. 3.) And it is thus with the two lines or couplets under our consideration: to speak in wrath is to vex in displeasure.

The word here translated "sore displeasure," literally means a *burning*, and that rendered "to vex," signifies to *terrify*, or *confound*, or *strike with dismay*. The verse may, therefore, be well rendered thus,—"Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and in his burning anger he shall confound them."

Then, says the Psalmist, shall He do it. *Then*: that is, after He shall have shown them how vain and fruitless have been all their schemes of opposition to the cause of Christ. When He shall have defeated all their projects and made them a laughing-stock to angels and men, *then* it shall be that He will begin to pour out upon them the cup of His fury.

You recollect how eagerly Haman had plotted the death of Mordecai and the destruction of the Jews. You recollect how everything went well with him for a time, and how fortune seemed to smile on all his wicked machinations. But things by-and-by took the turn against him; and mark the course they took. First came laughter, and then destruction. Haman is made instrumental in honouring the very man whom of all others he most hated. He is made to clothe Mordecai in the royal apparel, set him on the king's horse, put the royal crown on his head, and lead him through the city, proclaiming, as he goes, "Thus shall it be done to

* See Lowth's "Isaiah," Preliminary Observations, p. 24.

the man whom the king delighteth to honour." (Esth. vi. 11.) Here was the first downward step. Here the enemy of God's people was had in derision. And you may be sure that when the enemy of God or his people begins to fall, he will never be able to recover himself again. The descent is too precipitous; he must go headlong. "If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews," said Haman's wife to him, "before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him." (Ver. 13.) The first stumble of the enemy of God and his people is all that is wanted to complete his ruin. Haman's wife proved a true prophet: he did fall before Mordecai: on the very gallows that he had erected for the Jew, he paid the penalty of his own life.

This is a remarkable instance, brethren, of the difference of God's dealings with His enemies and those who delight to run the way of His commandments. "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree," says David, "yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." (Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36.) Great prosperity and sudden and entire destruction: this is often the lot of God's enemies; while on the other hand God's people are often kept long in the furnace of trial and affliction in order that their happiness may be the purer when it has passed through the flames. "*Wait* on the Lord," says David. The righteous have often great need of patience. They have to wait. They see the wicked in great prosperity about them, and their "feet are almost gone; their steps have well-nigh slipped." "But," says David, "wait thou the

Lord's leisure." The Lord abideth His own time; but "though he tarry, wait for him." "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." (Ps. xxxvii. 37.) His *end* is peace. All his life may have been one continued warfare, but his end is peace. Therefore, says David, "Wait on the Lord, and keep his way." Have patience: it will come at last. If not sooner, at least at the end: *it* shall be peace. "The end of the wicked shall be cut off," but "the end of the upright man is peace."

We have seen how God had the Jews in derision when He raised His Son from the dead, and showed by the miracles and signs which were wrought among the Christians that their cause was His own. Let us now, therefore, hear Him speak to them in His wrath; let us follow Him as He vexes them in His sore displeasure.

Not quite forty years had elapsed from the morning in which our blessed Lord burst the fetters of the grave, having overcome death and him who had the power of it, when this prophecy was fulfilled, in its largest extent, on the Jewish city and nation. During those forty years the Gospel had been preached—preached as a *testimony against* the Jews—in every country then known.* The religion

* "And we learn from the most authentic writers, and the most ancient records, that the Gospel was preached, within thirty years after the death of Christ, in Idumæa, Syria, and Mesopotamia, in Media and Parthia, and many parts of Asia Minor; in Egypt, Mauritania, Ethiopia, and other regions of Africa; in Greece and Italy, as far north as Scythia, and as far westward as Spain, and in this very island which we inhabit, where there is great reason to believe Christianity was planted in the days of the Apostles, and before the destruction of Jerusalem."—*Bishop Porteus' Works*, vol. v., p. 203.

of Jesus had extended to Spain, for, according to an old inscription,* the first general persecution of Christians under the tyrant Nero, in the year 64 A.D., raged in that country also. And there can be little doubt that the "sound that had gone out into all the earth" had reached even our own shores of Britain, while the city and temple of Jerusalem still stood. It is said by some that St. Paul himself † was the first to proclaim in this land the good news of the Cross of Christ. Be this as it may, the Jews who had crucified our Divine Lord had seen the utter fruitlessness of all their malignant fury in the great spread of Christianity over the world, before God's wrath was poured out on their own heads.

The details of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies under their general Titus, are admitted by all to be the most appalling and heartrending that ever have been told to mortal ears.

That prediction of our Lord was fulfilled in the history of this wretched people to the very letter. "In those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be." (Mark xiii. 19.) Then were poured out those overwhelming judgments which the prophet had so woefully lamented hundreds of years before,—"Behold, O Lord, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall

* "Echard, Ecclesiastical Hist.," vol. i., p. 348. It is but just, however, to observe that Mosheim thinks this inscription "is justly regarded as a mere forgery."

† There is an ancient tradition that Brennus, the father of Caractacus, having been converted when at Rome by the instrumentality of St. Paul, was the first to introduce the Gospel into Britain, which he did A.D. 58.—*Baxter's Ch. Hist.*, p. 5.

the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long? Shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord? The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets: my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword: thou hast slain *them in the day of thine anger;* thou hast killed, and not pitied. Thou hast called, as in a solemn day, my terrors round about; so that in the day of the Lord's anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed." (Lam. ii. 20, &c.)

Whoever reads the history of the siege of Jerusalem, as told by Josephus, will have read the best comment on this prophecy. He tells us there of a woman killing her child and eating it in the straitness of the siege. He tells us of the "Roman soldiers being quite tired of killing men." He tells us of their slaying the aged and infirm; of their reserving the young men who were the tallest and most beautiful for the triumph; of those above seventeen years of age being put into bonds and sent to the Egyptian mines; of great numbers being sent to the provinces, to be destroyed upon their theatres by the sword and by wild beasts; and of those who were under seventeen years being sold as slaves. 97,000 were carried away captive, and 1,100,000 perished in this single war. Thus the Lord spake to His Son's enemies in His wrath, thus He vexed them in His sore displeasure.

And the overthrow of Jerusalem was such an extraordinary event, that even Titus, the Roman general, a heathen, who knew not the true God, could see God's hand in it. "When," says Josephus, "he saw the

strength of the towers which the Jews had relinquished, the largeness of the stones and the exactness of their joints, he said, 'We have certainly had God for our assistant in this war, and it was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications, for what could the hands of men or machines do towards overthrowing these towers?'"

Some things are so wonderful in themselves, brethren, that man's natural reason can see, even without any light from revelation, that they are God's works, and not man's. His eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen, being understood, not only by the things that He hath made, but also by what He is every day accomplishing in the world. We cannot watch the events occurring on all sides of us without seeing Him; we cannot read history without seeing Him; indeed, we cannot lift our eyes without seeing Him. Hence the guilt of the heathen—having known God as they must have done from the witness that He gave of Himself; they glorified Him not as God, but changed His glory into that of birds or beasts, or creeping things, and thus held the truth in unrighteousness. (Rom. i. 23.)

Josephus accounts for the destruction of Jerusalem as he would have accounted for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, or for that of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. The Roman legions were only the fire and brimstone rained from heaven on the ripened guilt of her wretched race; the fall of her towers and bulwarks were only the throes of the indignant earth, in her eagerness to engulph her doomed children. "It did not," he says, "on any

other account, so much deserve these sore misfortunes, as by producing such a generation of men as were the occasions of this its overthrow."

Josephus was a Jew, and could not, therefore, be expected to understand the true cause of those dire calamities to the Jewish people which he records. Those senseless and infuriate men who carried on the war against the Roman arms, were the sons of those men who had clamoured for the death of Jesus Christ, and cried,—"His blood be on us and on our children." Josephus saw the immediate cause of Jerusalem's overthrow; but what a number of causes are linked together in the chain of God's dealings with men, before that which is the immediate cause becomes visible to the human eye. The senselessness, madness, and wickedness of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were an effect as well as a cause; they were an effect in the first place, and a cause afterwards. The curse that hung over Jerusalem and the Jewish policy and race, had begun to operate long before there was the slightest appearance of approaching danger. It manifested itself first (though men's eyes were so blinded that they could not see it) in the offspring of Christ's murderers; their pride, rebellion, and folly were the first marks of it. Whenever you see pride, rebellion, and wickedness flourishing unchecked, you may be sure that the plague has already begun, that the desolating shafts of God's anger have gone out on their errand of vengeance. Pride, rebellion, and wickedness unchecked, are only the first mutterings of the curse. They are the signs that God has sent men strong delusions that they may follow a line of conduct that will lead them to

destruction. It is God's way of punishing those who will not be reformed. "He blinds their eyes and hardens their heart, so that they cannot see nor understand;" and, consequently, follow on in the way to ruin. He gives them the spirit of slumber, so that they are no longer able to wake up to a sense of their impending danger. And does it seem a hard saying that God blinds men's eyes, and hardens their hearts, and gives them the spirit of slumber? If so, recollect that He does so to those alone whom His justice compels Him to punish and destroy. It is seldom that God punishes transgressors by a direct and sudden interposition of Providence. He does nothing precipitately; He leads them to their ruin by a circuitous route, and this He does by depriving them of sight and judgment. The Syrian army which came to apprehend Elijah were smitten with blindness, and conducted into the midst of Samaria—into the very heart of their enemies, instead of to Dothan, whither they thought they were being led. And it is ever thus with God's enemies. They are first blinded, given over to a reprobate mind, suffered to believe a lie, and then conducted to ruin. Now, God's dealings with those who are "willing to do His will," are the very opposite of all this. He opens their eyes instead of blinding them; "they shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." He opens their minds instead of shutting them; "because they love His law they shall have more understanding than even their teachers." Because "He is a God that hears and answers prayer," he therefore "teaches them to pray," "pouring upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication." They wish to serve Him, and therefore

He gives them the means and the power to do it. He designs to bless them, and therefore He shows them the way that leads to blessings.

You see, then, how all God's dealings with wicked men, no matter what outward character those dealings may assume, lead to their ruin; and how, on the contrary, all His dealings with the righteous, whatever aspect they may wear, tend to their ultimate good. Whenever you see wicked men prospering and joyful, you just see the Syrian army marching in high spirits into the heart of Samaria. A lying spirit from the Lord is making their heart glad at the mouth of the slaughter-house. But when you see the Christian downcast and sorrowful, under the world's frown, and the temptations of Satan, you see David an outcast and a wanderer, hunted by the enemy, and hiding in the cave of Adullam, a short time before he is made to sit on the throne of Israel and Judah.

You recollect what our Lord said to the Jews of his time, many of whom, no doubt, lived to perish in the destruction of Jerusalem. "Wherefore, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." (Matt. xxiii. 34, &c.)

Our Lord plainly meant by these words, that He would give the Jews an opportunity of filling up the measure of their crimes. "I will send them," he says, "and you will kill them, *that* the punishment may fall upon you." The

curse had been accumulating from the death of the very first martyr. Sin had been added to sin, and blood to blood. But yet the measure of "the iniquity of the Jews was not yet full." They had slain God's prophets; they would slay His Son; and, says Christ, I will send you others yet—prophets, wise men, and scribes. You shall have an opportunity of filling up the measure of your fathers to overflowing. A full vengeance awaits you, and therefore you shall have time to heap up to the full the measure of your iniquities.

You perceive the whole sin of the Jews did not consist in their crucifying Christ. They had been guilty of a prolonged course of rebellion to His sovereignty. They would not have this man to reign over them; their ceaseless cry was, "Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords."

And as their rebellion was long, so is their punishment. God's wrath was not exhausted with the destruction of their city and nation. "He had no joy in their young men, neither had he mercy on their fatherless and widows." (Isa. ix. 13.) "He stretched out his hand against them, and smote them; and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets; *but for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*" (Isa. v. 25.)

The Jews have been for almost eighteen hundred years, "without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim" (Hosea iii. 4); and yet God has not yet ceased to speak unto them in His wrath. That curse pronounced against them by Moses, is not yet exhausted,

and never can be exhausted, until "they confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, and their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity." (Lev. xxvi. 40, 41.) "I will make your cities waste," says God, "and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. And I will bring the land into desolation, and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. And upon them that are left alive of you, I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth. And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up." (Lev. xxvi. 31, 33, 36, 38.)

Brethren, how literally has this curse been fulfilled on the descendants of those men who killed the prophets, and crucified the Lord of Life! The Jew has had no home for the last eighteen hundred years, but has been an outcast, a wanderer, and a vagabond on the face of the whole earth. The curse of Cain has pursued him, and pursues him still. That prophecy of Balaam is a curse as well as a blessing, "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Count the nations of the world, and that of the Jews is not found in their number. Visit the Jew where you will, and he is alone. In the heart of London, or Paris, or Berlin, the Jew is alone. He is like an animal of another species—a

mammoth of antediluvian times, which may not pair or congregate with animals of the present day. The brand of murder is on him. God has marked him both as a lasting monument of His own righteous judgment, and a witness to the world that the Bible is true. Whenever you see a Jew, you have an ocular proof of the fulfilment of prophecy, and that punishment inevitably follows transgression. Thus, the fall of the Jews may be the riches of the world; thus, the diminishing of them may be the riches of the Gentiles. (Rom. xi. 12.)

Enough, I trust, has now been said, to show you how truly and awfully the Psalmist's prophecy has been fulfilled against the Jews, "Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." Awful, indeed, beyond all comparison, has been that fulfilment.

Let us ask ourselves, have we never opposed in any way the spread of truth and righteousness in the world? Have we never by example or precept fought against the Lord, and against His Anointed? Have we advanced the cause of Christ according to the ability that God hath given us? Recollect, "He who is not for him, is against him." There is no middle course. We must be on the Lord's side, or on Satan's.

Let, then, the subject considered to-day, induce us to be more active in His work. Let us stand forward so decidedly in His ranks, and under His banner, that the whole world may see who our King and Leader is. Thus, when God's wrath shall be poured out on His enemies, we shall be safe and secure, rejoicing in His favour, and happy in His love. The storm may rage

around us, and thousands may fall at our right hand, but it shall not come nigh us. And blest with His protection in time, we shall also be blest with His presence in eternity.

DISCOURSE VI.

PSALM II. 5.

"Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure."

IN my last discourse I showed you how these words of the Psalmist were fulfilled, in the case of the Jews, in the calamities which they suffered in the siege, and after the destruction, of their city and nation by the Romans. We saw, also, that they have been a fulfilling against them ever since then until this very day, and must continue to be fulfilled until the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. (Hos. iii. 5.) There is not a single promise in the whole Bible, from beginning to end, to lead us to expect that the curse will ever be removed from the Jews until they begin "to ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward." (Jer. l. 4.)

Some people, you are aware, are of opinion that the Jews shall be restored to their own land, and build up their city once more, *before* they are converted to Christianity. But this opinion is not founded on the teaching of Holy Scripture. You will find that the hopes held forth to the Jews in the prophets, of their restoration to their own land, invariably suppose their conversion. "If they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers," they shall be restored, but not otherwise. But

how can they be said to confess their iniquity so long as they do not confess that Jesus whom their fathers crucified is both Lord and Christ? It is for the rejection of Christ that they are scattered among the nations, and therefore they must continue to be scattered among the nations so long as they continue to reject Him. Whilst the sin remains, the punishment must necessarily remain also.

Some well-meaning people have denied the eternity of punishment. They think it inconsistent with God's mercy and goodness, if not with His justice, that hell should last for ever. But the history of the Jews is, I think, a sufficient proof to the whole world that neither God's mercy nor justice will suffer Him to remit the punishment so long as the sufferer remains unrepentant. For eighteen hundred years the Jews have been paying the penalty of their offences, and for eighteen thousand years more they will, we need not doubt, continue to pay, if they do not forsake the sin which has been their ruin. The only condition on which mankind ever have escaped, or ever can escape, God's wrath and punishment, has been, and must ever be, repentance and newness of life. To suppose that God will cease to punish before we cease to sin is to suppose His justice changeable, and that it will relieve Him from doing to-morrow what it compels Him to do to-day. It would therefore appear that punishment must necessarily be eternal from the very nature of the thing. For, unless we suppose that souls in hell are capable of repentance unto salvation, which we have no grounds for supposing, or that they are not naturally immortal, and must therefore in time cease to be, on what conditions can their punishment come to an end? That which compels

God to punish them to-day will equally compel Him to punish them to-morrow. Their sinful state being unchangeable, as we suppose it to be, their state of punishment must necessarily be unchangeable also. Thus the history of the Jews is well calculated to convince us that God is in earnest even in His most fearful threatenings, and that, however great His long-suffering may be, the time is coming when He shall most assuredly punish the guilty.

If we now turn from the Jews to the Gentile enemies of the Gospel of Jesus, we shall find that God began to speak to them also in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure; *after* He had shown them the vanity and folly of their rage and opposition to Himself and to His Anointed.

In the year 323 of the Christian era, Christianity had become the religion of the Roman State under Constantine as sole Emperor. At that time about one-half of the inhabitants of the Roman empire made an open profession of Christianity; and in about forty years more we find that the heathen superstition was generally renounced by all the educated classes, and that those who still adhered to it were called Pagans or Villagers. Here, then, the cause of Satan was driven into a corner; none but the ignorant inhabitants of remote villages adhered to it. The cause of Jesus had triumphed. There was here a clear and unmistakable sign of the Divine laughter, and the derision in which He had the rebels of His Son's sovereignty. We should expect, therefore, that the time was near when he would begin to "speak unto them in his wrath"; we should naturally begin to look out for the "then" of the Psalmist.

Now, if we turn to history, we shall find that the incursions of the Northern barbarians began exactly about this time.* "The seven angels which had the seven trumpets were just preparing themselves to sound (Rev. viii. 6)—those angels whose voices were to speak the wrath of God to the nations that had persecuted and slain the followers of Jesus. First came the Goths, under the command of Alaric, their king, who overran many parts of the Roman empire, dealing death, ruin, and destruction wherever they came. "The travellers who visited Greece several years afterwards," says the historian Gibbon, "could easily discover the deep and bloody traces of the march of the Goths."† And again, "The banks of the Rhine were crowned, like those of the Tiber, with elegant houses and well cultivated farms. This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert, and the prospect of the smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolations of man. The consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. That rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, was delivered to the barbarians; who drove before them, in a promiscuous crowd, the bishop, the senator, and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars." ‡

But Alaric did not confine his depredations to the

* That is, those incursions that ended in the overthrow of the Western Empire. Former incursions had been annoying rather than ruinous.

† "History of Decline and Fall," vol. v., p. 180.

‡ "History of Decline and Fall," vol. v., p. 225.

provinces. He invaded Italy itself, and Rome, the Imperial city—Rome, where the blood of the martyrs of Jesus had been so lavishly shed, was, after three successive sieges, sacked by the barbarians.*

Next after Alaric and his Goths, came Attila and his Huns, who, for the space of fourteen years, spread consternation over both East and West, filling the provinces of each empire with all kinds of plundering, slaughter, and burning. These depredators "turned their arms against the Western Emperor Valentinian the Third, entered Gaul, with seven hundred thousand men, and, not content with taking and spoiling, set most of the cities on fire." They then "fell upon Italy, took and destroyed Aquileia, with several other cities, slaying the inhabitants and laying the buildings in ashes, and filled all the places between the Alps and the Apennines with flight, depopulation, slaughter, servitude, burning, and desperation." †

"The whole breadth of Europe," says Gibbon, "as it extends above five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Hadriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied and desolated by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field." And again, "Words, the most expressive of total extirpation and erasure, are applied to the calamities which they inflicted on seventy cities of the Eastern Empire." ‡

* "History of Decline and Fall," vol. v., pp. 287—309.

† Newton's "Dissertations on the Prophecies," vol. ii., pp. 203, 204.

‡ "Decline and Fall," vol. vi., p. 52. The words to which Gibbon refers are those of Count Marcellinus, which he gives

It is remarkable that Attila was aware of his own instrumentality in executing on the inhabitants of the earth the vengeance of an angry God. "He called himself *the scourge of God and the terror of men,* and boasted that he was sent into the world as the executioner of God's just anger, that he might afflict the nations with all sorts of calamities."

Next came the Vandals, under Genseric, who (says the above-named historian, Gibbon) "seldom gave quarter where they found resistance, and the deaths of their countrymen were expiated by the ruin of the cities under whose walls they had fallen. Careless of the distinctions of age, or sex, or rank, they employed every species of indignity and torture to force from the captives a discovery of their hidden wealth." * This chieftain sailed from Africa, and directed his course towards Rome. Rome, once the mistress of the world, was now unable to resist the arms of a handful of barbarians. The consequence was that, during fourteen days and nights, the city was given up to the licentiousness of a brutal soldiery, who plundered it of all its treasures, public as well as private, sacred as well as profane. The conqueror returned, with his immense booty, and an innumerable multitude of captives, among whom were the Empress Eudoxia and her two daughters; leaving the state so weakened that in a little time it was utterly subverted.†

in a note :—"Pene totam Europam, invasis, *excisisque* civitatibus atque castellis, *conrasit.*"

* "History of Decline and Fall," vol. vi., p. 20.

† Bishop Newton's "Dissertations on the Prophecies," vol. ii., p. 205.

Next came Odoacer, King of the Heruli, at the head of an army of barbarians. It was reserved for the Heruli to complete the work which the Goths had begun, and the Huns and Vandals had carried on with such frightful success. By them Augustulus, as he was called, or Momyllus, was deprived of his crown, stripped of his imperial robes, and an end was put to the very name of the Western Empire.*

This brief sketch will be sufficient for my purpose. It shows you how the prophecy was fulfilled against the Gentile nations that had set themselves in opposition to the cause of Christ—"Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."

It had been under the sanction of a Roman Governor that our Lord was crucified. It had been by the edicts of Roman Emperors that the first Christians were subjected to all the tortures that human ingenuity could devise. Rome, even at that early age, had been drunk with the blood of the martyrs. The Roman Empire had been the great battle plain of the struggle between the cause of Christ and that of Satan. It was there that the kings of the earth had set themselves, and the rulers had taken counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed. Therefore, *there* must the Lord's fury be poured out. The throne whence issued the laws against Christians must crumble; the power that fought against Christ must fall. Where, therefore, is Imperial Rome that persecuted and slew the first followers of Christ? where now is the throne of the Cæsars? Thrones and nations, as well as individuals, must

* Newton "On the Prophecies," vol. ii., p. 206.

learn that on whomsoever the stone of stumbling shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

And this exactly accords with the character of the Gospel dispensation, as it had been described by God Himself in the page of prophecy. That dispensation was not only to be a year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion, but also a day of the Lord's vengeance. (Isa. xxxiv. 8.) Christ came, not only to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, but also the day of vengeance of our God. (Isa. lxi. 2.) When the year of His redeemed was come, the day of vengeance was also in His heart. (Isa. lxiii. 4.) He that spoke in righteousness, and was mighty to save, was also He that came in dyed garments from Bozrah. (Isa. lxi. 1.) Thus, from what Isaiah had written of Christ many hundred years before He became man, we should have looked for those overwhelming judgments being poured out on the heads of His enemies.

The stone cut out without hands was to become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth; but it was to do so, *after* it had broken in pieces and consumed all those kingdoms that lay in its way. (Dan. ii. 44.) Whatever in the lump did not submit to the leavening process of the little leaven, was to be crushed and destroyed.

The scattering of the Jews, and the woes inflicted on the Roman Empire, are remarkable instances of God's righteous indignation being made known towards His enemies; but they are only two out of many that might be adduced. Popery and Mohammedanism are evidently hastening fast to their fall, and we know that the great sin for which God is speaking to them in His wrath has

been their rebellion against Himself and against His Anointed.

Mahomet's was an open and avowed rebellion. With fire and sword, and all the appliances of force, fraud, and deception, he and his followers burst asunder the bands of Christ's sovereignty and cast away His cords. There cannot be a second opinion, therefore, regarding his final and complete overthrow. And it is, I think, evident that that overthrow is near at hand. Mohammedanism is wasting away, like the snow from the valley. "The sixth angel is already pouring out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof will soon be dried up, that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared." (Rev. xvi. 12.) If there were not a single prophecy in the whole Bible relating to the ruin of Mohammedanism, the Scripture under our consideration would be sufficient to convince us that it must be destroyed. It has been an enemy to Christ, an arch-rebel to his legitimate sway, and therefore it must perish. No power in earth or hell can save it. Its own character has sealed its doom.

Popery also must fall. It may be the Antichrist foretold, or it may not. I insist not on that; for I do not draw my conclusions from any other portion of sacred writ but that immediately under our consideration. Popery has fought against the Lord and against His Anointed, and therefore Popery must fall. True, she has made an outward acknowledgment of Christ's sovereignty. She has not denied with her lips the Father and the Son; but no other earthly power has ever contended more maliciously and successfully against all that distinguishes

the religion of Jesus from the other religions of the world. Compare the teachings of Popery with those of the New Testament, and you will have no difficulty in discovering that Christ's laws have been set at nought, that He Himself has been driven from His throne, and a rebel set up in His stead. Christ calls Himself the Door by which man may enter heaven, and Popery teaches men that she is the door, and that none can enter heaven who will not enter through her. Christ declares that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life; and Popery declares that all *must* perish except those who are within the pale of her own communion. Christ declares, by the mouth of His Apostle, that His blood cleanseth from all sin; and Popery declares that it is to penance and purgatory that men must look for cleansing and purification.

It is not my object, however, to contrast Christianity and Popery, except so far as to show you that the latter is an antichristian power, and therefore must of necessity come to ruin. And there is every reason to suppose that that ruin is now very near at hand. God has already laughed at, and had in derision, this Arch-rebel to His Son's sovereignty. The very means which she has employed to quench the spark of Evangelical truth have only fanned it into a flame. Like the Jews of old, she is witnessing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not only spreading to the utmost bounds of the earth, but taking root in her very midst. God has been long speaking to her in His wrath, too. She has begun to fall, and has been falling continuously for many ages. Like a huge mountain, slipping from its base, and gliding towards the sea, she

has been moving steadily on for some hundreds of years, towards her final destruction. Whether that destruction be a few years sooner or a few years later, it is not for human ingenuity to decide. But it cannot be far off. The gliding mountain will soon have reached the edge of the gulf, and then one plunge, and all will be over.

Now, brethren, recollect, I entreat you, that what is true of nations and states is equally true of individuals. History is full of examples of men and women having been brought to a fearful end who had dared to set themselves in opposition to the cause of Christ. And many of us have, in all probability, discovered that it is true in the course of our own experience. We can, it may be, call to mind many instances of the fulfilment of this prophecy which have come under our own observation. Experience, as well as history, testify to the truth of prophecy, that God will ever vex in His sore displeasure those who set themselves in opposition to the cause of His Anointed.

But there is a difficulty connected with what has been here stated, that will, no doubt, have suggested itself to the minds of most of you. The punishments inflicted on the Gentile nations were inflicted *after* those nations had openly professed the Christian faith. Christ's cause had triumphed; the ancient superstitions had been driven to the villages and remote districts, before God's avengers, the Goths, Vandals, Huns, and Heruli, were let loose upon the Roman Empire. It may, therefore, seem inconsistent with God's justice to suppose that He poured out His judgments on a nation which had returned to its allegiance, for the sins which that nation had been guilty of when in a state of rebellion. "Does not teaching like

this do away with the efficacy of repentance?" you ask. "To what end do we amend our lives if the punishment due to our past misconduct be visited on our heads whether we amend them or not?"

This is a reasonable objection; but I conceive it may be answered in more ways than one.

In the *first* place: We can hardly hope that, because Christianity had become the religion of the State, and was outwardly acknowledged by the great majority of the thinking portion of mankind, the people had therefore in general become true Christians. It must not be supposed that those who professed the Christian faith because their rulers and superiors had done so, differed much from what they had been before, except in name only. If, therefore, it had been just in God to punish those nations *before* their profession of Christianity, it must have been equally just in Him to do so *after* it; just, that is, as far as the adherents to the old superstition, and merely nominal Christians, were concerned.

But, in the *second* place: Suppose the greater number of those who made an outward profession of the faith of Jesus were sincere in their profession, as we trust they were; still, we cannot pronounce it inconsistent with what we know of God's dealings with mankind to believe that He reserved to their days the judgments evoked by the sins of their forefathers. To the Christian, indeed, those troublous times would be only what his Lord had taught him to expect. "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" and, "It is through much tribulation ye must enter the kingdom of heaven;"—such were the well-known prospects which the true subjects of King Messiah had before them.

You are aware that the innocent must often suffer with the guilty. And, no doubt, many of the saints of God tasted of the calamities which were poured out in those days, when God spoke to His enemies in His wrath, and vexed them in His sore displeasure. But then recollect that God can speak both in wrath and in love by means of the selfsame judgment. That visitation which will consume His enemies will be only a chastisement to His children. God chastens whom He loves by the very stroke by means of which He confounds those whom He hates. See the saint and the sinner dragged by the infuriate and brutal soldiery to be scourged, tortured, and immolated together at the same shrine, or crucified side by side on the same hill: to the one God is speaking in mercy, and to the other in judgment. In the ears of one the Voice whispers, "Whom I love I chasten;" "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. ii. 10.) In the ears of the other it cries, "The wicked shall perish; the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke they shall consume away." (Ps. xxxvii. 20.) It is only on God's enemies that judgments *can* fall. They have no power to touch a hair of his children's heads. The meanest house becomes a palace if the Queen take up her abode in it, and so the severest judgment becomes a chastening mercy when it has to do with the Christian. You see how it is, therefore, that although the righteous and wicked are mingled together, and consequently equally involved in every national affliction, yet it is the latter alone to whom God ever speaks in His wrath.

But, in the *third* place: Recollect that God ever deals

with nations as with individuals. Now it needs not be proved—for I am sure every one will admit it to be a fact —that men are often called on to suffer in old age for the sins of which they have been guilty in youth. You recollect what Job says to God,—"Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth." (Job xiii. 26.) Job was a perfect and upright man at the time his afflictions fell upon him, but you may be sure he had been guilty of iniquities in his youth, or God would never have given Satan such power over him, even for the trial of his patience.

But we have in David an example more to our purpose. No man ever repented more deeply and sincerely of any transgression than David did of his great sin in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. And we are told, moreover, that God put away his sin. Here, then, was a sin both repented of and forgiven; that is, it was forgiven so far as that David should not die for it; so far as that God should not cast him away from His presence. But who can read David's subsequent history without seeing that this sin was to him the beginning of sorrows? Thenceforward his life was one scene of trials and afflictions from without and from within, in his family and in his kingdom. Now, if David had been an ungodly man, all those afflictions would have been so many judgments; but being, as he was, a man after God's own heart, they were only chastisements. They followed in consequence of his sin, indeed; but David's sonship turned them all into a stream of mercy. That sonship was like the tree pointed out to the Israelites in the wilderness; it made sweet the

bitter waters of Marah. "Before I was afflicted I went astray," is the language of the Royal penitent's grateful heart; "but now have I kept thy law."

You see, therefore, that God's judgments on the nations were no more than we ought to have looked for from His known dealings with individuals. The nation as an individual had fought against Christ, and therefore the nation as an individual must suffer. Those inhabitants who had not repented, and consequently allowed the deeds of their fathers, underwent the judgments they so richly deserved; while those who had deserted the ranks of Satan and sworn allegiance to their lawful sovereign were only called on to undergo those afflictions and sorrows which they had been warned to expect, and which were needful to the trial of their faith, as well as to the growth and development of their Christian graces.

Brethren, enough I trust has been said to show you the danger of refusing to submit to the yoke of Christ. And recollect that those who will not take that yoke upon them and learn of Him, must take their portion with those nations and people to whom He has spoken, and is still speaking in His wrath. Let us, therefore, henceforth live and act as good and loyal subjects of King Jesus. Let us not only call ourselves of His name, but let us fight for His cause. The war between Him and Satan is not yet ended. The rebel chieftain is still far from being subdued. At home and abroad there is plenty of opportunity to fight for Christ and His kingdom. Let the world see then that we are on His side and not on Satan's. Let us act like good soldiers of the Cross. So that when

the battle of life is over we may hear the approving words of our leader as He welcomes us with the unfading laurels of victory—

> "Soldier of Christ, well done!
> Rest from thy loved employ:
> The battle fought, the victory won—
> Enter thy Master's joy."

DISCOURSE VII.

PSALM II. 6.

"Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

I HAVE already shown you how those nations and people who set themselves in opposition to Christ and His cause were in the first place had in derision by Him who sitteth in the heavens, and in the next place confounded by the utterances of His wrath. I have mentioned the destruction of the Jewish city and state, the dispersion of the Jews over all nations during the last eighteen hundred years, and the disasters and final overthrow of the Western Empire as instances in which the threatenings contained in this Psalm have been remarkably fulfilled. I have also alluded to the present tottering condition of Romanism and Mohammedanism, as symptoms of the ruin which awaits, and which must soon overtake them, for the sole reason that they belong to the category of powers that have fought against the Lord and against His Anointed.

I gave these as instances; but remember, brethren, they are only instances. The prophecy of the Psalmist has not been exhausted in these; on the contrary, it points to the subjugation of all that opposeth itself in any age to the spread and development of Christ's kingdom on earth. Even the very imaginations of the heart which the

world has never looked on, and every thought, must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. x. 5.) The time is coming when the seventh angel shall sound, and the great voices in heaven shall proclaim, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xi. 15.)

"Yet have I set my King," says God, "upon my holy hill of Zion." That is, notwithstanding all the opposition that has been raised against Him by His enemies, notwithstanding the wide-spread rebellion and deep-laid schemes to break off His yoke, yet being my King I have established His throne on my own holy mountain. Or if the passage be rendered, as it may be, "*And* I have set my King upon my holy hill," then the connexion of the whole Psalm thus far will be this:—Christ's enemies shall be laughed at; they shall next be stricken with dismay; and when this is done, *then* Christ shall be set up in the face of the world as God's own King on God's own holy hill.

The Greek version of the Old Testament which was made three hundred years before the Christian era, and which is known by the name of the Septuagint version, renders this verse thus: "And I have been constituted King by him on his holy hill of Zion;" making the words to have been spoken by Christ instead of by God the Father. Many other ancient versions follow the Septuagint, and render the verse as it has done; such as the Latin Vulgate, the Arabic,* Ethiopic, and Coptic. The Syriac, however, which is the earliest version which

* The Arabic of the London Polyglot renders it, "The Lord hath constituted me King for himself, on Zion the hill of his

we have of the Bible, after the Septuagint, and the Chaldee Paraphrase, which was made, as is generally supposed, before the time of our Lord, translate the place exactly as our authorized version translates it; and there is no manuscript or edition in the present day of the Hebrew text itself but corresponds with that translation. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the copy which the authors of the Septuagint used differed slightly from any copy at present known to exist. Nor is it to be wondered at that there should be certain discrepancies between the text of a book as it is now, and as it was two thousand years ago, when we take into consideration that all copies made previous to the art of printing were transcribed by the pen. Indeed in the manuscripts and editions of the Bible now extant, there are found to be no less than several thousand various readings. But then recollect that not one of those various readings affects a single doctrine of Scripture, and very rarely the meaning of even a single sentence. If there were a hundred times as many various readings as there are, supposing them to be of equally little importance, the Bible would be the very same Bible still; one jot or one tittle would not have passed from its pages of life.

Some people hold what is called the "plenary inspiration" of Holy Scripture. That is, they hold that not the sentiment and the doctrine only, but the very sentence, the very word, nay, the very letter, was written under immediate inspiration. Now, independently of that well-known law, that God never does for man what he can do

holiness;" but that of the *Propaganda Fide*, as given by the British and Foreign Bible Society in their Arabic Bible, agrees word for word with the Septuagint.

for himself, this variety of readings of the sacred text quite militates against this opinion. If every word and letter has been written by inspiration, how shall we know what has been inspired and what not? Who will decide which is the true reading? The truth is, God inspired men to write certain truths; and those truths they expressed (controlled by God so far as that they should express those truths, and none else) in their own language and in their own style. The truths are God's, the language is man's. That which is man's may feel the hand of time; the casket may be rubbed and worn in the lapse of ages, but the jewel is intact. Men may clothe God's revelation in what language they please, but they cannot dim its lustre. It is the same to-day as it was when first embodied forth by the inspired penman, and it shall continue the same when the years allotted to truth's trial shall have rolled by.

The word translated "set," may be also rendered "anointed," and perhaps ought to be so rendered in this place. The allusion would then be to the custom of pouring oil on those persons who were called to certain sacred offices. Kings, high priests, and sometimes prophets, were anointed on their advancement to office. Thus, Aaron and his sons were anointed at the time of their consecration. (Ex. xxx. 30.) Saul was anointed; David was anointed no less than three times; Solomon, Hazael, Jehu, Joash, and many others were anointed; and Elisha was anointed to the prophetic office as the successor of Elijah. (1 Kings xix. 16.) Thus, Christ's kingly office being a sacred one, He is said to have been anointed to it. God anointed Him, not with the holy

oil of the Jewish dispensation, indeed, but with that of which that oil was a type. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth," says St. Peter, "with the Holy Ghost and with power." (Acts x. 38.)

Most expositors of this Psalm, proceed on the supposition that Christ was set on the holy hill of Zion *before* "the heathen raged, and the people imagined a vain thing." And they make Christ's exaltation at His Father's right hand, when, after His resurrection, He ascended far above all principality and power, to be the "setting on the hill of Zion," here alluded to. And if we must follow the literal interpretation of the Psalm, in order to discover the spiritual, it will be necessary to adopt this system of interpretation. It was *after* David was anointed King over all Israel, and had expelled the Jebusites from the stronghold of Zion, and taken possession of it for himself, that his wars with the surrounding nations might be said to commence. If, therefore, those wars in which David was involved, after he had been anointed king, and began to reign on Zion, be referred to here as the Psalm's *literal* counterpart, then it is but fair to suppose that those rebellions, *spiritually* understood, must have come *after* Christ's exaltation. But we have the authority of the apostles themselves, for applying the language of this Psalm to events which took place before Christ's death, and consequently *before* what the expositors call His enthronement on Zion. They expressly apply this prophecy to the gathering together of Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles,* and the people of Israel

* Rather, the "nations and people of Israel, *i.e.*, the nations of Israel, and the people of Israel. (See Hammond on Matt. xxiv.,

against the holy child Jesus. (Acts iv. 27.) Here, therefore, the system of building the spiritual interpretation on the literal as its foundation, is shown to be erroneous by apostolical authority.* If we follow that system, we must necessarily suppose that Christ was set on the holy hill of Zion, or, in other words, made to sit at His Father's right hand, after His ascension, *before* the kings of the earth had set themselves, and the rulers had taken counsel together to break His bands asunder. But if we follow the apostles, then that which the expositors regard as the "setting on the holy hill of Zion" took place *after* those events, and not *before* them.

It is not, therefore, necessary to regard the time of Christ's exaltation at His Father's right hand after His ascension, as the time of His being installed on God's holy hill of Zion.

Now, the exaltation of Christ being shown by the exposition of the apostles themselves to have come after, at least, *one* insurrection of rebel powers and nations, there is evidently no reason why we should not regard it as coming after *all* such insurrections. And it is in this light that I am disposed to regard it. It appears to me, that Christ has not yet been enthroned on God's holy hill of Zion, and will not be, until God shall have laughed at, and vexed in His sore displeasure, all who shall yet rise up

note *e.*) The Gentiles could hardly be said to have any part in this first fulfilment of the Psalmist's prophecy.

* The words, "Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion," could not have been spoken by God with regard to "Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel," in the sense in which they are generally understood.

against Himself, and against His Anointed; that is, all who shall do so *before* that coming time of the Church's glory, when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

You recollect, that David had been king for some time before his final exaltation. He had been king, but not universal king. He had reigned over the men of Judah, but was not yet anointed king by the elders of all Israel. His was a circumscribed sovereignty, so long as he sat on the throne of Hebron; it was a universal sovereignty, when he was transferred to the royal seat at Jerusalem; universal, that is, as far as the chosen seed were concerned. Now, if we take into consideration that David, as a king, was a most express type of Christ—so express, indeed, that King Messiah is sometimes called King David, we shall naturally expect that Christ will reign over a limited kingdom also, before a universal dominion shall be conferred upon Him. And so we find it. Christ reigns, indeed, but His seat of sovereignty is in Hebron, so to speak. He reigns over the tribe of Judah, but the men of Israel have not yet submitted to His sway.

I pretend not to define what will be the universality of Christ's kingdom on earth, when that kingdom shall have reached the zenith of its glory. We know that He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. (Psalm lxxii. 8.) We know that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. xi. 9); but whether this language necessarily implies that wickedness will be altogether extinct, or only that it will be in the minority, it would be useless to attempt to decide. The language of the Psalm which

we have been considering, would not lead us to expect that the enemies of Christ will be finally annihilated, but only punished and subdued, when Christ shall be anointed King on Zion. And perhaps this is the view that we ought to form of that coming period of the Church's history, which is known by the name of the Millennium. We have reason to suppose that Christ will *reign* with His saints on the earth a thousand years, whether personally or not does not concern us at present. We are told in the Book of Revelation, that Satan will be bound a thousand years, so that he shall not be able to deceive the nations until those thousand years are expired. That is, as I understand it, all nations will submit to Christ's yoke, and make an open profession of Christ's religion. There will be no nation then, as there are many now, so far deceived by Satan as to worship four-footed beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. Christ will reign with the saints during that period. He will reign, because all nations, and people, and kindreds, and tongues shall have become Christian, and consequently shall have acknowledged His sovereignty. Now, when this shall have taken place, then will be fulfilled, as I conceive, the words under our consideration, "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Christ shall reign then as He does not now, for God will have confounded and subdued all His enemies. But though all enemies shall be subdued, we have no grounds for believing that the elements of rebellion shall have been quite destroyed. In the absence, or rather during the restraint, of Satan, the nations will all submit to Christ as their King; but when Satan's term of imprisonment shall have expired, and he shall have returned again

to his old haunts, we are informed that he will go out once more to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, and gather them together to battle against the camp of the saints, and the beloved city. (Rev. xx. 8, 9.) The elements of rebellion against Christ had not, therefore, been totally extinguished, or they could not have been rekindled again. They were only smouldering during those thousand years. They did not blaze forth, because they were not fanned into a flame. Christ's enemies had been subdued, but they were not dead. They only wanted their old leader, in order to hoist the flag of rebellion once more, and rage and murmur, and take counsel against the Lord, and against His Anointed, as they had done in the olden time.

David, whilst he reigned on Zion, held the neighbouring nations in subjection: "He sat in his house," says the historian, "for the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies" (2 Sam. vii. 1)—but reigned in the hearts of the chosen people alone; so in the universal reign of Christ, there will be rest from all enemies of the Gospel, not because those enemies shall not exist, but because they shall have been brought into subjection. It is thus the saints shall reign with Christ; it is thus they shall possess the earth. When the Son of David shall reign over the twelve tribes of His chosen ones, the Philistines and Moabites, and the children of Edom, shall become His servants and bring gifts; but they will serve as slaves, and not as sons.

I am aware that this view of the millennial period does not by any means agree with that commonly received. In Revelation xx. 4, 5, St. John says, "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for

the Word of God; . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." From these words it is argued that the dead saints shall be raised at the commencement of the millennial period, and live on the earth; and, with Christ at their head (personally, as is generally supposed), reign over the earth until that period have come to a close.

The difficulty in the way of receiving this interpretation is, that St. John says it was the *souls* he saw. He saw the souls of those who had been beheaded, and *they* reigned with Christ. Now, even although we understand the passage literally, and take it for granted that the very souls of the martyrs shall live and reign with Christ on the earth, yet there is nothing in all this to which we can give the name of *resurrection*, as that word is generally understood. St. John, however, calls it a resurrection. "This," he says, "is the first resurrection." He speaks of it, you observe, as if it were generally known that there was to be a first resurrection. And I am disposed to believe that he meant to speak of it as of something of which he had spoken before. Nor can I help thinking that he calls it the first resurrection in order to guard his readers *against* understanding him as speaking of a resurrection of the body.

If you turn to the fifth chapter of St. John's own Gospel, you will find him relating a discourse of our blessed Lord, in which two resurrections are expressly mentioned. Look at the twenty-fifth verse: "Verily, verily, I say unto you," says Christ to the Jews, "the

hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Here is a real resurrection—the dead hearing the Son's voice, and living. But, observe, our Lord says that the hour in which this resurrection shall take place is "now:" "the hour is coming, and *now* is." Again, look at the twenty-eighth verse: "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth." Here is another resurrection. In the first resurrection the hour is not only coming, but now is; in the second, the hour is only coming—it is not said that it is *now*, nor could it be so said. In the first resurrection the dead shall hear Christ's voice and live; in the second, they that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and come forth. Here, then, brethren, are two resurrections; and I have no doubt that St. John alludes to this very discourse of our blessed Lord when he says of the saints' living and reigning with Christ, "This is the first resurrection." The first resurrection, I need hardly say, is a rising from the death of sin unto a life of righteousness. Hence our Lord says, "The hour is coming, and now is." Even then the dead had begun to live through the Spirit working by the Word of the Gospel; but the hour was coming in which they should rise to life in greater numbers. The morning sun was quickening a few worms of the dust, and giving them wings to soar aloft and disport themselves in its rays; but when the midday sun should have shed his perpendicular beams on the lifeless mass of human nature, myriads on myriads should feel the life-giving heat, and rise from the death in which they had been lying. Hence

our Lord says, "The hour is coming, and now is;" putting, you observe, the coming time before the present, as being more glorious. A few children of the resurrection were even now coming to the birth; but the time was coming in which nations should be born in a day. Now, when St. John says, in Revelation, "This is the first resurrection," he seems, as I have already observed, to allude to this passage of his own Gospel, as if he had said, "Do not understand me as alluding to a resurrection of the body; it is of the *first* resurrection that I speak."

I conceive, moreover, that the words that follow afford additional evidence that the Apostle is not speaking of a resurrection of the body. "Blessed and holy is he who shall have part in the first resurrection," he says; "on such the second death hath no power." The second death is the death of the soul, the death that never dies. Now it is no information to tell us that the risen and glorified saints shall not be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: no one, I suppose, ever suspected that they should; but to tell us that "he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death"—as it is expressed elsewhere (Rev. ii. 11)—is indeed most comforting news, and worthy of being announced by an Apostle.

It will, no doubt, be asked, Why does St. John say that he saw the souls of those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and of other martyrs, living and reigning with Christ, if he alludes merely to a resurrection from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness?

Brethren, the meaning of the Apostle appears to be this: When that glorious time shall have arrived in which all the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of

our Lord and of His Christ; when He shall sit on the holy hill of Zion, and have rest round about from all His enemies; then the Gospel shall come to the many as it does now to the few, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." And not only will Christ's loyal subjects have multiplied, but faith shall have become more living, love more intense, and zeal more fervent, than they are found even in the few in these cold ages of the Church. The spirits of the old martyrs, and of those who have suffered and died for Christ in all ages of the world, shall have, as it were, revived. Those few scattered lights that are just sufficient to mark the way from the first martyr, Stephen, down through the dark night of Christianity, shall seem to have clustered together, like shining nebulæ of stars, to adorn, beautify, and illumine the Church of the millennial glory. There shall be millions then of Christ's worshippers, full of the same life, and light, and love as enabled the martyrs to sing in their prison, and bless God at the stake.

You see, I trust, that there is nothing in St. John's description of the Millennium to militate against the view which I have here advanced, but rather to favour it. It will be a time in which Christianity shall have spread over every nation, and people, and tongue; a time in which Christ's enemies shall be mute through fear; a time in which the Christian graces shall have reached their greatest perfection in all God's people; and, therefore, a time in which the saints may well be said to live and reign with Christ.

And what a prospect! Who that has ever tasted of

the joys of the religion of Jesus Christ, does not sigh for the time when the graces which that religion can bestow shall have attained to all their universality, intensity, and perfection? When the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days. (Isaiah xxx. 26.) The Spirit of God that has been contending with Satan, and is still carrying on His unceasing warfare, shall then have the field to Himself. Satan shall be subdued. The great leader of the nations who took up arms against the Lord and against His Anointed in many a hard-fought battlefield, shall then be taken prisoner of war. He shall be borne in fetters to his dungeon, and there in chains which no art or force of his shall be able to break asunder, he shall lie until a thousand years shall have passed over him. The strong man, armed, who has kept the palace of the world so long shall be bound, his house shall be spoiled, and the Holy Spirit shall reign with undisputed sovereignty in the hearts of the followers of Jesus. Oh, happy they who are reserved for those bright times of the Church's triumph! well may they be called kings and priests unto God! How beautiful will be the vine of the Lord's planting, when love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, charity—those golden fruits of the Spirit—shall have ripened, in shining clusters, on its branches!

Brethren, this glorious time is coming! It may be near. The great prophetical epochs are evidently drawing to a close, and the signs of the times lead us to expect that Christ will soon be anointed on the holy hill of Zion. Happy they who shall have been instrumental,

even in a small degree, in preparing the way for the full triumph and exaltation of Zion's King. Blessed above all others shall they be who shall have been found co-workers with God in hastening the universal reign of the Prince of Peace. Oh, then, let not your opportunities of doing good in your day and generation, and thus of extending Christ's kingdom, pass unimproved. There is no other work so worthy of an immortal being as work for Christ and His cause. We all pray daily "Thy kingdom come," oh, then, let us act as well as pray. Our day is now bright; let us therefore work while we have the day; the night cometh when no man can work. When once death's summons shall have reached us, we shall wish for even an hour to work for Christ in, but we shall wish in vain. What is then undone must remain undone for ever; there is neither work, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave, whither we are hastening.

DISCOURSE VIII.

PSALM II. 7.

"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."*

HITHERTO the language of this Psalm may be considered as simply prophetical. The nations of the world would set themselves in opposition to the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but all their schemes and counsels would be defeated, and they themselves would be finally subdued. He against whom they had rebelled would tread them in His anger and trample them in His fury, and notwithstanding all their rage and malice against Himself and His cause, *would* reign over them from the holy hill of His sovereignty. Such is the gist of the Psalm to the end of the sixth verse.

In the seventh and two following verses, we have a decree or oracle of Jehovah declared, on which the foregoing prophecy may be considered to have been founded. It seems to be brought forward as confirmatory of what had been foretold in the former part of the Psalm. As if the speaker had said, "That I may be believed in what I have here predicted, I will show that I have my warrant for all that I have spoken. I will declare the decree of Jehovah himself, by which I

* "Beloved as a son is to a father, thou art to me pure as if this day I had created thee."—Chaldee.

am constituted ruler and inheritor of all nations, even to the utmost bounds of the earth."

These three verses may therefore be considered the *second* part of the Psalm. The first part is a prophecy made in consequence of a previous knowledge of the second part; and the second part is adduced to convince the reader that the prophecy contained in the first part may be relied on. You can now see the peculiar force of that question with which Christ, or David in the person of Christ, begins His prophecy, "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?" There can be nothing more natural than that one with a knowledge of Jehovah's decree should ask such a question; and how vain must seem any imagination, scheme, or counsel which is directly opposed to that which we *know* to be the purpose of the Almighty! "Why do the heathen rage, since Jehovah has said to me, 'I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance?' Why do the people imagine a vain thing? vain, for the same Jehovah has promised me for my possession the very utmost parts of the earth."

We see here the same obedience to the laws of His Father, which was one of our blessed Lord's great characteristics when He sojourned amongst men. He who says in the Psalm, "I will declare the decree, or speak to the prescript, as some would render it,* says also in the

* "Sensus hic duplex esse potest. 1. Narrabo ad legem, h.e. mea narratio erit in legem. 2. Narratio Secundùm præscriptum, et *modum* certum, tanquam legem."—*Cocceius.*

"I will declare concerning the oracle."—*Gesenius.*

"The word signifies, most generally, *a definite statute, ordinance,* or *appointment* of God or man."—*Parkhurst.*

Gospel, "I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." (John viii. 28.) You recollect how, in the New Testament, He plied against Satan the same weapon that He plies here against Satan's subjects. He spoke according to the prescript. He did not speak of Himself, but as He had heard so He spake. "Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is thus and thus written," He said, just as He says here to the rebellious nations, "You rage and murmur to no purpose, for thus and thus runs the Word spoken." Not that Christ had not authority both here and when He combated Satan in the wilderness to speak as of Himself, and might not, if He had so pleased, have delivered His "I say unto you," without quoting Scripture or decrees. It was for our sakes He adopted this method of overwhelming His adversaries. He has taught us that we must ever meet the suggestions of Satan by a "Thus it is written;" and by a "Thus it is written," we must endeavour to convince wicked men of the fruitlessness of their pursuits, and the certainty of their ruin. Christ, by His so frequently appealing to the Scriptures to confirm what He taught, has inculcated on us the necessity of proving all things by the most powerful argument He could use,—the argument of His own example. His whole character is the best commentary on those words of the Prophet, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah viii. 20.) Brethren, study the Word of

"Statutum, *ad religionem Deique cultum pertinens, quod aliquid refert, et repræsentat, cujus magna ex parte ratio ignoratur.* Decretum, constitutio, demensum, præscriptum, portio, pensum, pars statuta."—*Castell.*

God; search the Scriptures, that ye may be able to resist the adversary. Prove all things; and, having proved them, hold fast that which is good.

But the question arises, "When was this decree, or oracle, or prescript, delivered? What time are we to understand by the "this day" of the Psalm? "This day," says God the Father to Christ—"this day have I begotten thee." We know that Christ, as the Second Person of the Trinity, was begotten before the world. He is eternal, as the Father is eternal. How, then, are we to understand the words, "this day"?

The Spirit of God, brethren, must ever be the best interpreter of His own meaning. Hear Him, therefore, interpret in the Apostle what He has written with some obscurity in the Psalmist—"God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children," says St. Paul, "in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (Acts xiii. 33.) In this place, you observe, the Psalmist's language is explained by the Apostle to refer to Christ's rising again from the grave; consequently the "this day" of the Psalmist is the day of Christ's resurrection. Here, then, we have the *date* of Jehovah's decree respecting the inheritance and possession of His Son Messiah.

This decree is represented as having been declared by Christ at some time subsequent to His resurrection from the dead. "The Lord *hath* said unto me," He says, speaking of the occurrence in the past tense. The word may, however, be rendered in the present tense, "The Lord *saith* to me;" and then the idea presented to us will be that of Christ standing on the earth *just after*

He has burst the fetters of the tomb, and after having challenged the nations with folly and vanity for the rage, fury, and opposition which He foresees they will manifest against Himself, declaring, as if from a written roll, this law of Jehovah.

There is no allusion made, therefore, in this place to God the Son's eternal generation, as many ancient, and some modern, expositors are inclined to think. And what follows in the next verse is an additional proof of this, namely, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." Here is a Son, and here is His inheritance. God has begotten a Son, and He gives Him His portion, even all the kingdoms of the earth. But surely this could not be said to be the inheritance of the eternal Son—the Second Person of the Godhead. Such a portion would be ill worthy of Him by whom and for whom all things were created. (Col. i. 16.) You are to understand, therefore, that Christ is here called a Son, and said to be begotten, in allusion to His official capacity,—as the Head and Representative of His people.

Turn to the fifth verse of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and you will read thus, "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." Here it is plainly implied that the words of Jehovah's decree, or oracle, established Christ in the high priesthood. The high priesthood was the character and prerogative of the Sonship to which He had been begotten. This begetting, whatever it was, made Christ a high priest; but it is evident that Christ was not a high priest in consequence of His *eternal* Sonship. And in

the ninth and tenth verses the Apostle makes it clear that Christ became a high priest by the resurrection from the dead. "Being made perfect," he says, "he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that believe; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec." The meaning of which words evidently is, that Christ having suffered all that it was necessary He should suffer, *then* became the Author of eternal salvation, and this He did by being made of God a high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Now compare these two Scriptures together, and you will see that the evident inference to be drawn from them is this,—Christ was made a high priest by the decree of Jehovah, as it is recorded in the second Psalm, and this decree began to take effect after Christ had done and suffered all that it was necessary for Him to do and suffer, that is, after He had died on the cross and lain three days in the grave.

This, therefore, is the Sonship spoken of in this Psalm, namely, Christ's appointment to the mediatorial office—His exaltation to be the Head and Representative of the Church of God.

But you will ask, Is Christ's whole Messiahship comprehended in His high-priesthood? Is He not a King as well as a Priest? Have we not just seen Him anointed King on God's holy hill of Zion?

Yes, brethren, Christ is a King as well as a Priest. His Melchisedekian priesthood supposes His Kingship. Melchisedec, you recollect, was King of Salem as well as priest of the Most High God; consequently, if Christ be a high priest after the order of Melchisedec, He must be a King also.

There is a remarkable prophecy of Christ in the sixth chapter of the Prophet Zechariah relating to this subject. The Prophet is speaking of the man whose name is the Branch, and he describes Him thus:—"He shall bear the glory, and he shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." (Ver. 13.) Here, you observe, Christ is described as a priest-king: He shall be a Priest upon His throne, and on His two capacities of King and Priest is said to depend His whole work as a Mediator. You are aware that the great work which Christ undertook to accomplish was to make *peace* between man and his Maker. Now the Prophet says here that the *counsel of peace* shall be between them both; that is, between Christ's two characters of Priest and King. As Priest and King He shall work out the whole work that He has undertaken to accomplish; consequently, His whole Messiahship is comprehended in His Melchisedekian priesthood, for, as we have already seen, by virtue of that priesthood He is a King as well as a Priest.

But you will ask, Was not Christ a high priest before His resurrection, as well as after it? To which I reply, certainly not, according to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. That writer's whole reasoning on the subject proceeds on the supposition that Christ was not a high priest till after His resurrection. "Being made perfect," he says, that is, having gone through the whole ceremony of consecration to His office, He then (and not till then) was "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec." If He had been a high priest before, why

undergo the ceremony of consecration to that office? a ceremony which was one of suffering, too; for, according to the same Apostle, the "Captain of our salvation was made perfect," that is, was consecrated to His office "through suffering." "It became God to do so," he says; that is, it became God to consecrate Christ to His office by a series of sufferings. It was a necessary thing; God was, as it were, bound to do it. Now, how could it be said to become God to consecrate Christ to an office through suffering, if Christ were fully installed into that office already?

Again, the Apostle says expressly—"If Christ were on earth, He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law." (Heb. viii. 4.) "Every high priest is ordained," he says, "to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." (Heb. viii. 3.) Now, if you look to the twelfth verse of the ninth chapter, you will learn what the gift and sacrifice was that Christ had to offer, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place." His own blood was, therefore, what Christ as a high priest had to offer. But this was an offering that Christ could not be said to make until He had risen from the dead. As soon as Christ had expired on the cross, indeed, then the victim was slain, the blood was shed, the incense was ready; but there was no Priest to enter the most holy place with that blood so long as Christ hung on the tree, or lay in the grave. The sacrifice was made, but it was not offered. It was when Christ rose from the dead, and then alone, that He did, or that

it was possible for Him to enter the holy place as a high priest, and with His own blood to sprinkle the mercy-seat.

You see, then, that by His resurrection from the grave, Christ became a high priest after the order of Melchisedec—the perfected Messiah—a Priest upon His throne; and you understand with what limitation the language of the Psalmist is to be interpreted,—"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

But let us regard this subject under another point of view. We have seen that all the kingdoms of the world are given to Christ as a Son's portion; but we are also informed that His power and dignity are conferred upon Him as a reward for His obedience. "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, *because* he hath poured out his soul unto death." (Isa. liii. 12.) "He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him." (Phil. ii. 8, 9.) Now, putting these two things together, namely, that all things are given to Christ, as He is a Son, or the great Head and Representative of His people, and that all things are made subject to Him as a reward of His obedience, you will see how the Sonship here spoken of is so connected with His obedience as to be the fruit of it. And this is no more than we should have inferred from what the Apostle tells the Hebrews (ii. 17), "It behoved him," he says, "to be made like unto his brethren in all things." His brethren, that is, His sanctified ones, for it is they whom He is not ashamed to call by that name. (Heb. i. 11.) Now, if the Sonship of His brethren be the reward of their obedience, as we know it is, then that

Sonship of His, by which He is their brother, must have been the reward of His obedience also, otherwise He could not be like them in all things. You are to recollect, however, that Christ's obedience was necessary, not for His own sake, but for that of His Church. He was to be the Great Exemplar from which we might learn what perfection is, and with which all the faithful of every age might compare themselves. There must be an image to which God's predestinated ones should be conformed. (Rom. viii. 29.) Now, that image was a Sonship conferred as the reward of obedience, and consisting in a resurrection from the dead. The conformity to that image must, therefore, be, not only a Sonship conferred as the reward of obedience, but must consist in a resurrection from the dead also; that is, from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. Hence the Apostle says, that by the predestinated ones' becoming conformed to the image of God's Son, Christ would be the First-born among many brethren (Rom. viii. 29); and this He certainly could not be, if the conformity to His image did not suppose, and require, a birth similar, in all respects, to that by which He became the Firstborn. It is evident, therefore, that as Christ's Resurrection-Sonship was the reward of His obedience, so it was also the great pattern, in all respects, of the Sonship of all His followers.

Again, birth and resurrection, when spiritually understood, are almost convertible terms in the New Testament, and perhaps in the Old also. The new birth of the Christian is often spoken of as a resurrection; and the resurrection, even of the body, is occasionally spoken of as a birth. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in

two several places, compares Christ's rising again from the dead to His first coming into the world. Thus (Heb. i. 6), where our English translation reads, "And again when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world," it may be read as you will see in the margin, "When he *bringeth again* the first-begotten into the world." When He bringeth again; that is, by raising Him from the dead; comparing, you observe, this bringing into the world with His birth at Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary. And in another place (Heb. xiii. 20) he has these words, "Now the God of peace that *brought again* from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that good shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." Here the Apostle implies that God had brought Christ from the dead before, and compares the two transactions, namely, His birth and His resurrection, together, making His coming forth from the grave a second birth, as His coming forth from the womb of the Virgin Mary had been a first. But in another place he is still more explicit on this subject. Speaking of Christ (Col. i. 18), he says,—"He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the *Firstborn from the dead,* that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Here the resurrection from the dead is expressly called a birth, Christ is the First-*born* from the dead.

From this high-priesthood of Christ, the Apostle holds forth to believers the greatest comfort and encouragement. "But this man," he says, "after he had offered one sacrifice for our sins, sat down for ever at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for

ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 12—14.) You see here a complete and entire salvation wrought out. That one offering which the great High Priest made when He rose from the grave, with the blood of the everlasting covenant, has made the saints perfect for ever. There is no more offering for sin required, for God remembers no more the sins and iniquities of His people; they are perfected for ever. If they sin, there is no new sacrifice needed, as was under the Levitical law; the one offering that has been made looks forward to all time and to all transgression. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and His blood, even the blood that was shed eighteen hundred years ago, cleanseth from all sin, and shall cleanse from all sin, till the end of time. There is no more sacrifice for sin required, and therefore we may have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Let us not fear, then, as if God were not appeased. God *is* appeased, fully appeased, by the one offering of our great High Priest; and therefore there is free access for the vilest amongst us to come to the very mercy-seat itself. There is a way opened, nay consecrated, through the veil, that is to say His flesh, even to the inner sanctuary. That is a new and living way: it is the path of life; death dies along it, and the withering and the fading bloom again as they come near it. Let us not tremble as we approach, as though we were strangers and aliens, without a friend or a representative. It is *our own* High Priest who is over the house of God; oh, then, let not our souls starve for lack of bread, when the granaries of our Joseph are full to overflowing. Only "let us draw near, with a true heart

and full assurance of faith." God likes to be trusted; He likes to be believed. To distrust God is to dishonour Him. "The just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back," says God, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him." That we may not draw back, therefore, let us pray and strive and watch and work for this full assurance of faith. Let us have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, "for if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." Let us strive to have a proof in ourselves that we belong to that covenant which God has made with His people—"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. viii. 10—12.)

DISCOURSE IX.

PSALM II. 7.

"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

WE have already seen that the Apostle Paul applies this language to our Lord's resurrection from the dead. We have seen that the Sonship here spoken of is not the eternal Sonship, in regard to which Christ was begotten before the worlds, but that it is, on the contrary, only another title for His Melchisedekian priesthood, by which, as Priest and King, He performs the whole work of the perfected Messiah.

I am now desirous of bringing this subject before you under another point of view; for I am convinced that under these words of the Psalmist lies one of the most important doctrines of Christianity.

You recollect that in our Lord's discourse to Nicodemus, He told him he must be born again, and that whosoever was not born again could not see the kingdom of God. You are aware that there are some who speak of this figure as a bold orientalism—a hyperbolical mode of saying that the moral life must be reformed. It will be our task, therefore, to-day to consider this subject as it appears involved in the one before us, and examine, as far as

we can, within that limit, what light there may be thrown on it by the Word of God itself.

I have said that Christ's resurrection-sonship is the great pattern, in all respects, of the sonship of all the truly regenerate. Now, if this be the case, there is a new birth required, in the strictest sense of the word,—a new birth, that is, as far as a passing from death to life can be called a birth. Whether this is so or not will perhaps become more evident as we proceed.

Recollect, that in Christ's resurrection the Church of Christ had its very existence—that it was begotten and born by the very act of Christ's rising from the dead. "God quickened us together with Christ," says the Apostle; that is, when God quickened Christ in the grave, He quickened His Church, at one and the same time; or rather, by the very act of quickening Christ, He quickened His Church.

The same power, moreover, is said to have been exerted in believers as that which raised Christ from the grave. "The exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe," says St. Paul, "is according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." (Eph. i. 19, 20.) It is evident, therefore, that the change, whatever it is, that is wrought in believers, is equivalent to that which was wrought in Christ, when His dead body became a living one.

But, not only are we said to be quickened together with Christ,—not only are we said to have the same power exerted in us as that which raised Him from the dead: we are also said to be quickened by the same Spirit. "If

the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you," says St. Paul, "he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 11.) * Now, if the same power as that which raised a dead body from the tomb be exerted by the same Spirit that put that power forth, can we think that the effect will be a merely moral renovation? Surely not. It is not a new principle of life, but it is life itself, that must be bestowed, or there will not be such a power exerted, there will not be the quickening of the same Spirit. There must be a rising from the dead, or we do not, and *cannot*, belong to a Church which is quickened together with Christ.

Nor is the figure of a resurrection ever applied in Scripture, as far as I can find, to a mere improvement of an already existing state, but invariably to a passing from death unto life.

In the Old Testament, the prophets sometimes foretell the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and the re-establishment of their political existence, under this figure. Thus, in Isa. xxvi. 19, the prophet represents

* This passage is generally understood as referring to the resurrection of the body at the last day. Such, however, is evidently not the Apostle's meaning. He is speaking of the carnally and spiritually-minded state; and the resurrection of the body has no connexion with the scope of his reasoning. What he means by the words, "shall quicken your mortal bodies," is to be gathered from the preceding verse, where he says, "*If Christ be in you*, the body is dead because of sin." He plainly does not allude to the body's mortality, for that does not depend on the fact of Christ being in us. In whatever respect, therefore, the body is dead because of sin, in the same respect shall the Spirit that raised up Christ quicken it.

God as saying to Israel, in their captivity or dispersion (for the language will suit either state), "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." That phrase, "together with my dead body shall they arise," has led some to suppose that there is an allusion to Christ's resurrection and the doctrine of the Church's being quickened together with Him. But you will see that the words "together with" are printed in italics, and consequently are not in the original. The literal, and, I have no doubt, the correct, translation would be, "Thy dead shall live; my dead body shall arise;" that is, God here addresses Israel as a nation, and tells her that her dead shall live. He next recognises that nation's relationship to Himself. It is His nation, His heritage, and, although it is dead, it is His still. "My dead body," He says; "that is, the dead carcase of a nation that is mine—*it* shall arise." Here, then, brethren, is a death, and here is a resurrection brought before us. It is not a degeneracy in the moral life that is spoken of. It is not a promise that the tone of the Jews' morality shall be raised a few notes higher. It is a literal death and a literal life. The Jews were really dead as a nation, and it was as a nation that God addressed them: as a nation He told them they should live.

Again, in the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel you have the same event predicted under a similar figure. The prophet represents himself as being carried out by the hand of the Lord, and set down in the midst of a valley which was full of bones. Of these bones he says that

they were very many and very dry. By the direction of God, however, Ezekiel prophesied to those bones, and as he prophesied, there was a noise and a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. By-and-by the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them, and on his further prophesying, the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet.

Now the prophet is not left in doubt as to what is meant by this re-animation of the dry bones. God tells him plainly that the bones are the whole *House of Israel;* and that the vision of their re-animation signifies that He will place them again in their own land. Observe the bones do not represent individuals, but the whole Israelitish state and policy. If the vision were applicable to individuals, it might be argued that the resurrection means no more than a moral renovation; but being applied by God Himself to the whole house or nation of Israel, which was dead in the truest sense of the word, the resurrection here spoken of cannot mean a moral renovation, but an infusion of the very principle of life into that which was dead, by means of which it was raised up.

Now if you keep in mind what is here stated, and reflect that that change which is produced in believers by the operation of the Holy Ghost, whereby they become God's sons and daughters, is called in the Bible a resurrection, you will have one of the strongest proofs that I am acquainted with, that that change is a passing from death unto life. The conversion of the heart to God is not a polishing up of the old materials, as it were; it is not taking the heart as it is and trying to make the best

of it; it is a taking away of the heart of flesh altogether and creating a clean heart in its stead. You might as well take a corpse and dress it up in holiday attire, and call what you had done a resurrection, as call that a conversion which consists in a mere reformation of life and morals, while no new principle of life is implanted within. All such conversion is only a disfiguring of the face; only a whitewashing of the sepulchre.

I have said that we are informed in God's Word that believers are raised up with Christ at His resurrection. And this they are in two respects: in one respect in a way peculiar to themselves, and in another respect in a way common to the whole race. They are in the first place raised up from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, and this raising up is peculiar to themselves. This, as we saw in a former discourse, is called in Revelation the first resurrection,—"Blessed and holy are they who shall have part in the first resurrection: for on such the second death shall have no power." Blessed and holy indeed! The first resurrection is a greater blessing than the second, as the death of the soul would be a greater misery than the death of the body. The second death shall have no power over those who are risen with Christ to a newness of life. The first death shall have power over them, for the body must die; but the second death shall have no power over them; they are Christ's sheep, they can never perish.

But believers are raised up with Christ in a way common to all Adam's race. I allude to the general resurrection at the last day—the resurrection of the body. I say that all mankind shall be raised up from their graves in conse-

quence of the resurrection of Christ. Many people are of opinion that believers alone will be raised at the last day by virtue of Christ's resurrection; but there is no foundation in Scripture for such an opinion. The Apostle says expressly, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive." (1 Cor. xv. 22.) He is there speaking of the resurrection of the body—he is proving it—to the Corinthians. "Since by man came death," he says, "by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (21st verse.) Here are two terms used universally—death, and the resurrection of the dead. Man, when living, died in Adam's fall; man, when dead, is raised in Christ's resurrection. "All," says the Apostle, "shall be made alive," that is, all shall be reanimated. Some have endeavoured to prove from this text, that all men will be saved; but St. Paul is not speaking of salvation at all, he is speaking of mere reanimation. All shall not be saved in Christ, but all shall be reanimated in Him. In this sense alone, shall all be made alive. Thus Christ's rising from the dead is a savour of death unto death to them that perish, as well as a savour of life unto life to them that are saved.

You perceive, therefore, that there are two resurrections mentioned in Scripture, and both of them depending on the resurrection of Christ; namely, the quickening of the dead soul by the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead, which takes place in God's chosen ones alone; and the making alive of the dead body at the last day, which will take place in every child of Adam. Now recollect that these two things are spoken of by the Holy Spirit in exactly the same terms—the one is called a resurrection as well as the other—and you will be forced to the conclusion

that the natural man is as dead to spiritual life, as that dust that has lain for centuries in the grave is dead to animal life; and that it as certainly requires a new principle of life to be infused into the natural man in order to make him spiritual, as a dead body needs a new principle of life in order to live.

Let me adduce a passage or two in which the newness of life of believers is called a resurrection. In the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul informs us that we are "buried with Christ by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, *even so* we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." The Apostle means by the "likeness to Christ's death," a death unto sin; and he says, if we have been planted in the likeness of that death, that is, buried by baptism into a death unto sin, we shall also rise in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, that is, having passed from death unto life, we shall, like Him, live henceforth unto God. In this passage, you observe, there is a death mentioned as well as a life. Man is here represented not as a dead corpse into which the Holy Ghost must infuse the breath of life before it can live; he is, on the contrary, represented as having life. But then this life is the very opposite of that which raises him up in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. In the proportion in which this life is developed in him, in the same proportion is he worse than dead. He has passed many degrees beyond the regions of mere death. So that the Holy Ghost has not only to give man life; He has also to destroy life in him.

Man in his natural state has life—powerful, intense life—but it is the life of sin. Now this life, called by St. Paul the "body of sin," must be destroyed. It is the natural enemy of that other life which the Holy Ghost begets in the soul, and fights with it until one or the other is conquered. Its watchword is ever "No quarter! Slay, or be slain!" It is the soldier of ten thousand battles, and the hero, it is to be feared, of many. A thousand times conquered, it returns to the charge, and would almost seem as if that language had been written for its especial use, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy! When I fall I shall arise." (Mic. vii. 8.) You see how there is even a greater exertion of power required to raise men from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, than to raise up their bodies at the last day. The body is only dead, whereas the soul is more than dead; it has passed the limit of mere death, and sunk to the nadir beyond.

But there is another respect in which the first resurrection differs from the second. The resurrection of the body we have every reason to believe will be accomplished in a moment. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of man and come forth." "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." "The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and the dead shall rise." All these Scriptures give us the idea of a sudden and momentary starting up from the dwelling-places of dust. But not so the resurrection of the soul from the death in which it has been held captive. *This* will be a work of time. Nor shall the soul be merely passive like the body;

it must co-operate in its own resurrection. The Holy Ghost is indeed the sole agent in the raising again of the soul, as well as in that of the body; but He accomplishes the same end by different means. He raises the body *immediately*, but the soul *mediately;* that is, it is by working in it *to will* and *to do* that He raises it up. Turn to the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, and read at the seventh verse. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him." Here there is a *willing* and a *doing*. St. Paul has such a desire for Christ that he counts all things but loss, and suffers the loss of all things, for His sake. There is a longing after something here—nay, there is a striving after it; and what is that thing? The Apostle himself informs us, at the tenth verse: "That I may know the power of his resurrection," he says, "and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." This was that for which St. Paul counted all things but loss. This was the end and aim of all his hopes—namely, the resurrection of the dead; that is, the rising from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. Here, then, you see the soul's co-operation in its own resurrection; you see it denying itself; you see it disregarding all things else, if it may only attain to this. You see here a willing and a doing.

It is somewhat singular that this passage is generally

understood as if it related to the resurrection of the body at the last day. A very little attention to the scope of the Apostle must, I think, make it evident that he is speaking of the new life of the Christian—the resurrection of the soul from the death of sin. Thus, in the following verse, he says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." Already attained what? Not the resurrection of the body, surely, for every one knew he had not attained that; but the perfection of the new man after which he strove. Thus he continues, "But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." That is, perfection in holiness. He had been apprehended of Christ Jesus that as a chosen vessel he should bear much fruit. The will of God concerning him when He apprehended him on his way to Damascus, was his sanctification; and now, says Paul, I follow after, if I may apprehend—lay hold on—that sanctification. "I count not myself to have apprehended it," he continues; that is, he was not yet perfect; he had not yet attained to the resurrection of the dead; "but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before; I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The mark towards which St. Paul pressed was perfection in holiness—a mark towards which all of us ought to press daily; at that mark lay the prize of the Christian's high calling, and that prize was the never-ending joys of heaven. The mark was a likeness to Christ—a conformity to His image; and the prize was being Christ's. The mark was the first resurrection, and the prize was exemption from the second death.

Here, then, we have an Apostle working and striving for the resurrection of the soul. He is so earnest in his desire to attain his end, that he has not a thought to bestow on all that he has passed by. He does not flatter himself by comparing what he is now with what he was at some previous period of his Christian life, or with those whom he has left behind. He forgets all that he was, and all that he has outstripped in the race, and only thinks of what is yet to be done, and of the prize beyond. The prize stands in the distance, and towards that prize he continues to press in his earnest, determined course, as though he were the last in the lists, and all his competitors were far before him.

How forcibly the work of regeneration in the soul is expressed by those words, "That I may know him and the *power of his resurrection*, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death." The power of His resurrection—that is, that the same power may be exerted, and the same effect produced in me, as were exerted and produced in Him when He was raised from the dead. Here is the new man struggling to get free from the bondage of corruption—from the grave of his corrupt nature. He is rising out of the death that surrounds him, like the bright butterfly from the cerements of the noisome caterpillar. It is a hard struggle, and a protracted one, for hear him exclaiming in another place, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. vii. 24, *marg.*) He has not yet known the power of Christ's resurrection: he has not yet attained to the resurrection of the dead. He is reaching forth—pressing forward to it; but the sur-

roundings of the old man still hold him fast; the law in his members still brings him into captivity to the law of sin. It is a death-struggle, and therefore he cries out, "O wretched man, who shall deliver me?" Who shall make me know the power of Christ's resurrection? Who shall enable me to rise, in spite of all these bonds and fetters of sin and corruption, to that which I strive after, the resurrection of the dead? Happy Paul! who in his extremity found a deliverer! He who saved the sinking Peter saved also the sinking Paul. We hear his sob of gratitude as he exclaims, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

But the inspired writers go into still further particulars in this matter. They not only inform us of our rising with Christ, but they also tell us of our being buried with Him. If we had not been buried with Christ, we could not have risen with Christ. Observe, how all the Scriptures that treat of this subject, proceed on the supposition that we are dead—that Christ found us dead when He came into the world, and therefore appointed a means whereby we might be buried with Himself, that when He arose He might, like a mighty conqueror, raise us all up together. "We thus judge," says St. Paul, "that if one died for all, then were all dead." (2 Cor. v. 14.) The death of Christ was the proof of the death of humanity. Why die for all, if all or any were alive? Here then is the basis, the foundation, of the whole structure of Christianity—all were dead, and Christ died for all. After death comes burial. And so the Apostle informs us, that "we are buried with Christ in baptism" (Col. ii. 12.); and again, that "as many as were baptized into Jesus,

were baptized into his death." (Rom. vi. 3.) Here, therefore, is the burial; we are by Christ's ordinance buried with Himself, that we may rise with Him. We are dead by nature, we are buried in baptism, and we rise with Christ. And here we have the death, burial, and resurrection of the new man.

Hence, I think, we may find a key to unlock that passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians which has perplexed the commentators more than almost any other text in the New Testament: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Cor. xv. 29.) The Apostle was in that chapter arguing with those who denied the resurrection of the dead; and after having proved the certainty of that event from the resurrection of Christ, next varied his argument, and showed the Corinthians that, by their submitting to the ordinance of baptism, they admitted the very principle of a resurrection. By doing so, they confessed themselves dead; for, as we have seen, baptism is a burial. Hence, they are said to be baptized for the dead. Now, if they believed there was no rising again, why submit to the ordinance of being buried with Christ in baptism? "If the dead rise not *at all*," says the Apostle; that is, if there be absolutely no resurrection of any sort, why conform to that which, in its very nature, supposes a resurrection? Such appears to be the meaning of that passage.* And

* Since writing the above, a copy of "Barnes's Notes on the New Testament," has fallen into my hands, in which I find the following:—

"(3). It has been held by others, that to be baptized for the

here is another proof that the change which the heart undergoes, when it passes from a state of nature to a state of grace, is a change from death unto life.

dead, means to be baptized *as* dead, being baptized into Christ, and being buried with Him in baptism, and that by that immersion they were regarded as dead."

Who those "others" are, I know not, but it is satisfactory to know that I am not alone in the opinion I have advanced.

The two most plausible interpretations of this passage that I have seen, are the following, namely :—

1. The Apostle here refers to the profession of a belief of the resurrection of the dead, which was required of all candidates for baptism. This is Dr. Hammond's opinion, and that adopted by Barnes. The full construction of the sentence, according to this interpretation, would be this,—"What shall they do, who at their baptism professed their belief of the resurrection of the dead, if the dead rise not? Why are they then baptized in the hope of a resurrection?" But surely such an argument as this is unworthy of Paul. Who at the present day would think of proving the resurrection of the dead from the fact of many having been baptized (supposing such to have been the case) in the belief of it? Would not such argumentation prove anything that ever was believed? And if it be said, that St. Paul was reminding those persons who denied the resurrection, that they had professed their belief in a resurrection at their baptism, the argument is equally weak. It proceeds on the assumption that that must be true which we have *once* believed to be so.

2. The second interpretation is this,—"The Apostle refers to the case of those who presented themselves for baptism, immediately after the martyrdom of their brethren, or at their funerals; as if fresh soldiers should enlist and press forward to the assault, to supply the place of those who had fallen in battle." This interpretation was proposed by Sir Richard Ellis, and has been adopted by Doddridge and Scott. But it is by no means evident that martyrdom was a general thing at Corinth, in the Apostle's days; or, even if it were, that there was ever such a practice as that here alluded to. The notion of baptism for such a purpose seems to have arisen from the Apostle's words, or not, *vice versâ*.

Enough, I trust, has now been said to convince you, that when our Lord told Nicodemus that he must be born again, before he could enter the kingdom of God, He meant exactly what He said. Indeed, the whole kingdom of God is nothing more or less than one great resurrection—a large, fertile and lovely land rising up from the ocean of death. The whole Christian economy began with a resurrection; by means of a resurrection it is carried on day after day, and in a resurrection it shall end. Be not deceived; in order to belong to this wonderful and magnificent brotherhood, you must be born again. You must be raised up from the death in which you were born at the first. Your souls are by nature as destitute of spiritual life, as the corpse in the grave is destitute of animal life.

But granting that such a custom did prevail, what argument could be grounded on it for a resurrection to unbelievers in general? It might, indeed, afford presumptive evidence that persons baptized under such circumstances expected a resurrection, but surely St. Paul would hardly argue from that there was one.

Neither of these interpretations, therefore, can satisfy the demands of honest criticism; and they are certainly the most plausible that I have met with.

It is observable, that though the Apostle mentions the hypothesis of the dead's not rising, in no less than four other places of this very chapter, yet this is the only place where he says, "If they rise not *at all*." The word ὅλως (at all, *omnino*), must surely have some force in the passage; but no interpretation that I have seen assigns it any, or even notices it; whereas, in that which I have offered, it becomes most expressive. And the passage thus understood affords the strongest argument that I am acquainted with, that St. Paul understood the change from what is called a state of nature to a state of grace, a *real* passing from death to life.

The breath must come from the Almighty and breathe upon the slain, or they can never live. No forms, no ceremonies, no decencies of religion, no polishing up of the old man, will do. There is a new life wanted, a total and radical change in the heart and its affections; without this you may have a name to live, but you are dead. You have neither part nor lot in this matter; you have no interest in this resurrection; you have not risen with Christ, and therefore you cannot live with Him.

Oh, then, give God no rest day or night, until He has bestowed upon you that one gift that He has promised to all so explicitly and so freely—the greatest and best of all gifts, His own Holy Spirit. If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He shall quicken your dead souls, and they shall live; and then, and then alone, you can ever be conformed to the likeness, and be partakers of the power, of Christ's resurrection.

> "Fountain of life and living breath,
> Whose mercies never fail or fade!
> Fill us with life that hath no death,
> Fill us with light that hath no shade."

DISCOURSE X.

PSALM II. 7.

"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

WE have already seen that these words of the Psalmist were fulfilled in our blessed Lord's resurrection from the dead. We have also considered the doctrine connected with this subject and arising from it, namely, the resurrection of the soul from the death of sin unto the life of holiness; and have found that to be born again, in the Scripture sense of the word, is not merely to have our morals reformed and our sentiments changed, but that it is, on the contrary, to have a new principle of life infused into us, whereby, from being dead, we live. As our Lord's body was first dead and then made alive, so our souls are dead, and so must they be made alive, or those Scriptures which speak of the power of His resurrection being made known in us, and of our rising with Him from the dead, are without any certain and definite meaning.

I had thought not to continue this subject any farther; but on reflection it occurred to me that, having found this new creature, we ought to make some inquiries into his manner of life, and discover, if possible, wherein he differs from the rest of mankind.

Christ was born to the Sonship, whereby He is the first

begotten among many brethren when He was raised from the dead, and so when we are raised up with Him we, as His brethren, are sons also. There is this difference, however, in His resurrection and ours—He was begotten a perfect man; we come to the birth as babes; in which respect Adam, the great head of *his* family, was also unlike all his descendants.

The generation of grace, therefore, follows the same laws as the generation of nature—its children are born babes, and not men full-grown. They grow up to puberty and manhood as the natural sons of Adam grow; and like them, also, they require food, nursing, clothing, exercise, and protection, in order to thrive and be in health. What provision, therefore, is there made for this new generation of men? Nature has been very bountiful in providing suitable sustenance for all that *her* hand hath made, even for the very lowest of her creation. The beast of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, each has its proper food within its reach, its proper means of self-defence, and its proper instincts to use them. Has *grace* had less foresight in providing for the wants of her higher creation than *nature* has shown for her lower? Here we have new-born babes, babes in Christ: how, then, are these to be nourished in order that they may grow up to man's estate?

Food is *most* essential. Whatever children are deprived of, they must not be deprived of food. They may live without clothing; they may live without exercise; but they cannot live without food. Whence, then, is food to be procured for the children of this new creation?

Turn to the second chapter of the First Epistle of St.

Peter, and read at the second verse, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." The sincere milk of the word is, therefore, according to the Apostle, the food which God has provided for this new generation of men. The *sincere* milk—the milk must not be mixed with any other compound, it must be pure and unadulterated. It must be the milk of the Word, too—pressed from the Word as the juice from the grape. When this pure milk of the Word is given to new-born babes in Christ, they grow thereby—they thrive on it—it suits their infancy. It suits their natures, too,—they are Christ's children, and therefore nourished by Christ's Word.

The Word of God is the Christian's food, from the first dawn of his young existence until he has put off his tabernacle of clay. Its pure milk is pressed out for the new-born babe, and its strong meat is given to the full-grown man. St. Paul informed the Corinthians that he fed them with milk and not with meat, because they were only babes in Christ, and, consequently, not able to receive the meat of the Word. And after having mentioned to the Hebrews Christ's Melchisedekian priesthood, he told them that he had much to say on that subject; but as they were so dull of hearing, he could not then venture to say it. "Ye have need that one teach you which be the first principles of the oracles of God," he says, "and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." (v. 12.) And yet the milk that the Apostle supplied to those babes in Christ is found strong enough food for the most experienced Christians of the present day. When I discoursed to you lately of

Christ's Melchisedekian priesthood, I was giving you only a little of the milk which St. Paul complained he was obliged to give to his unthriving Hebrew converts; and I apprehend some of you considered it food almost too strong for even your ripened manhood. But, brethren, if you have so little appetite for even the milk of the Word, what would you do if its strong meat were served up for your daily repast? You would, I am afraid, starve in the midst of plenty. You would soon become nothing but breathing skeletons, reminding one strongly of Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. And why is this? It is not because some of you at least are not of full age, but because, to speak in the language of St. Paul, "you have not your senses exercised by reason of use to discern both good and evil." You have been lingering over the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and consequently have made such slow progress towards perfection. You have been contented with the A B C of Christianity. You have been laying again and again "the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God." You know what a prodigy a child of forty would be in the generation of nature; but in the generation of grace children of forty, and fifty, ay, and of sixty, are to be met with at every turn. It is no unusual thing to see the old man in Christ sipping the same milk now that he sipped in the first and weakest stages of his babyhood. And if it were possible to dilute it with some more simple element, you would in all probability hear him complaining that the milk, in all its native purity, was too strong for his impaired powers of digestion. Now, brethren, there must be something in

fault when things are thus. The exercise of which the Apostle speaks must have been neglected. There has been no effort made in youth to feed on stronger diet. The young Christian has fed on milk until he can feed on nothing but milk; and the consequence is, that he neither has, nor ever can have now, the muscle or strength or energy of him who has accustomed himself to strong meat.

And recollect that it is in the Word, and in the Word alone, that support for the sons and daughters of this new creation can be found. You may search the whole world over from one end of it to the other, and you will not find one single article of food that the Christian can live on, but the Word only. Always endeavour to remember this, when you read books at home, or listen to discourses or sermons from the pulpit. No matter how interesting they may be, no matter what fine notions they may contain, there is nothing in them that the soul can feed on except what is brought directly or indirectly from the Word. They may stir you up; they may excite you; they may terrify you; or they may soothe and comfort you; but the soul is not fed; it is lulled, but it is the lull of stupefaction; it is roused, but it is the excitement of drunkenness.

And as there is no food suited to the peculiar nature of the child of God but that derived from the Word alone, so there is nothing else half so agreeable to his taste. Like Ezekiel's roll, it is "in his mouth as honey for sweetness." It is, in the words of the Psalmist, "the rejoicing of his heart, better unto him than thousands of gold and silver." When the soul is in a healthy state,

what an intense craving it has after this spiritual food! It feels as if it never could be satisfied. It returns to it again and again, eagerly laying hold of the milk or the strong meat of text after text, until it begins to fear that the whole Bible will be exhausted before it shall have found enough. Now, there is no surer sign of rapid growth in the spiritual man than an insatiable appetite for his proper food. Whenever you find anyone poring over his Bible day after day, extracting from it its precepts, its warnings, and, above all, it precious promises, and storing them up in his memory and in his heart, you may be sure that that person's spiritual concerns are in a thriving state. He is growing up to manhood fast. It is for want of this longing for the soul's sustenance that we meet with so many stunted, starveling Christians in the world. Instead of growing, they hardly take enough to keep them alive. They are nothing but mere skin and bone; and you sometimes feel inclined to doubt whether the breath has not left them altogether. Oh, it is a blessed thing to have this longing, this hungering and thirsting after the spiritual manna which the Holy Ghost supplies with such a liberal hand to all God's children. For remember it is the Holy Spirit who extracts the food from the Word, and administers it to each and everyone severally as He will. He shows us the inexhaustible fulness of Christ, and teaches us to receive of that fulness and grace for grace. He presses out the milk for babes, and furnishes grown men with strong meat. Like a kind nurse He watches over the new created family with unceasing care, consulting for their peculiar wants, and providing for their peculiar dangers, nourishing and cherish-

ing them with untiring diligence. They are of His own begetting, born of His will, and therefore He takes care of His own. Happy the man who has his daily bread supplied him by this blessed Spirit from the inexhaustible storehouse of the Word. He will increase in wisdom and stature day after day, and grow up in favour with God and all his brethren.

The food of the new creature is therefore derived from the Word. This is his natural support. It is here he finds the meat that endureth to everlasting life; it is here that he drinks of that well of water whose waters fail not.

But food is not all that is necessary. Raiment is also indispensable. Let us inquire, therefore, a little further into this new man's manner of life, and learn wherewithal he is clothed.

We may, I think, be sure that humility forms an important part of the Christian's wardrobe; or, perhaps, I should rather say, of the Christian's clothing. I apprehend the Christian needs no wardrobe. He carries all his clothing on his back, and carries it always. He never leaves it off. He never changes it. He has not one suit for Saturday and another for Sunday. He has not one coat for one society, and another for another. He does not hang up his garment of humility within boards or curtains, and put it on only when he has some favour to ask or expect. Nor does he, like the wolf in sheep's clothing, put it on simply that he may tear and devour the flock. Humility is his natural garb. It adheres to him in all societies and under all circumstances; nor does it, chameleon-like, change its shades of colour

with the sun and the weather. The Christian's coat of humility is weather-proof and time-proof too. Like the shoes and clothing of the Israelites in the wilderness, it waxeth not old. It will serve him the forty or fifty years of his pilgrimage through this "waste and howling wilderness," and carry him to the flood of Jordan, and be as fresh and new to the very last moment as it was the day he put it on. Do not then, be so saving of your humility, brethren! Do not hang it up so often in your chambers. If you are really possessed of such an article do not hide your possessions. The world is naturally very slow of belief in this matter, and therefore, in order to leave it no room to doubt, it will be necessary to wear your humility in public.

"Be clothed with humility," says St. Peter, "for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Pet. v. 5.) There is no more decisive sign that we are still strangers to the grace of God, than a want of humility. No matter what show of religion we make, if we have not humility, we are still ignorant of its power. You will meet people in the world who would make very excellent Christians if they could only get over this humility. It is the greatest stumblingblock that lies in their way. It is a thing very difficult to counterfeit, too; and when people sometimes do contrive to get up an appearance, it is no difficult matter to see the monster pride lurking beneath. If Christians might, as St. Peter speaks, "be presumptuous, self-willed, and despise governments," the way to heaven would be too narrow for the multitude of passengers. The broad way would be comparatively deserted, and all its noisy, quarrel-

some, self-conceited fraternity, would be jostling and pushing through the strait gate so incessantly, that the humble and the meek would stand a poor chance of ever getting through. But thanks be to God, brethren, we are in danger of no such companionship. In order to get on the narrow way, these loud professors must pass through the door of humility. And this they never can do. Their necks are too stiff to allow of their stooping so low. It is only those who wear humility's garments, whose joints are pliable enough to admit of their creeping on hands and knees through that low-roofed entrance. All others invariably try to climb up some other way. Like the giants of old, they would scale heaven's ramparts and take the city by force, but it is only to experience that the avenging thunders are not yet cold, and that a fall and destruction are the inevitable consequences of pride. God gives grace to the humble, and to the humble alone. So that if the proud and self-willed ever pass heaven's portals, it will not be by grace. Nay, it will be in spite of God that they will do it; for "God resisteth them," says the Apostle. He pushes them back; He hurls them down from their scaling-ladders; so that pride must dethrone God before it can sit in heaven.

Let us ask ourselves, are we clothed with humility? and let us remember that if we are not, we have little reason to suppose that we are even babes in Christ.

But humility is not the only garment which is worn by the children of this new creation. "Put on," says St. Paul, "bowels of mercies, kindness, meekness, long-suffering, and above all these things charity." (Col. iii.

12, 14.) What a goodly array of splendid raiment is here! It outshines the lilies of the field, which outshone Solomon in all his glory. The eye of man never lit on an object so bright and beautiful as a child of God decked out with all these. It is, indeed, too bright. Eyes that have been accustomed to look on the dark things of sin and sorrow are dazzled by its brilliancy, and hate it for its beauty. It would have fewer enemies were it less lovely. Its very brightness multiplies its detractors. The sun seems dark to the dazzled eye; and if love covers a multitude of sins, hate discovers a multitude, and invents more. The child of God who is decked out in his own native garments will be sure to have many enemies.

Let me direct your especial attention to one of those things enumerated by the Apostle, namely, charity. "Above all these things," he says, "put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." Charity is a sort of over-garment, by which all the other parts of the Christian raiment are, as it were, bound together, and united into one harmonious whole. Charity is a bond, no matter how we regard it. It binds all the graces of the individual Christian together; it binds Christians themselves together, and it binds the whole body of Christians to their great Head, Christ. It is the bond of perfectness, too; for whatever is bound by it is by that very binding made perfect. Charity is to the world of grace what the law of gravitation is to the world of nature. The drop of dew that glitters in the morning sunshine is as round and complete as the greatest world that circles round the greatest centre.

"The very law that moulds a tear,
And bids it trickle from its source,
That law preserves the earth and sphere,
And guides the planets in their course."

So, whatever is bound together by charity, becomes a perfect whole, *totum tere atque rotundum.* The heart of the lowliest Christian, where charity dwells, is the scene of as great perfection as the Universal Church of Christ. The Universal Church is a mighty ocean, in which every drop is a perfect sphere; it is one great unit, made up of millions of units, each in all respects like itself. Hence the Apostle calls charity the bond of perfectness. Without charity there could be no Christian, and no Church; there could be no oneness, and, consequently, no perfection. All the parts would fly off at tangents, and the whole Christian brotherhood would be broken up into innumerable fragments. Nay, the Christian himself would become the scene of woeful dissolution and decay. Humility, kindness, meekness, long-suffering, would have lost their proper places, and have separated for ever, or become jumbled together in a confused mass. No wonder, therefore, the Apostle says, "Above all these things put on charity." You recollect in what terms the same Apostle speaks of this charity in 1 Cor. xiii. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor," he says, "and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." And then, that there may be no doubt in people's minds as to what he means by charity, he gives us such marks and tokens of it that we cannot mistake it when we see it. "Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not

puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil." We may, I fear, give up the search for this charity until some great change takes place amongst us. Who amongst us seeketh not his own? who amongst us is not easily provoked? who amongst us thinketh no evil? Brethren, as long as these verses are in the Bible, there will be little excuse for spiritual pride. Here is a standard which few, if any of us, may expect ever to attain. When, therefore, you find yourselves in danger of getting puffed up with self-conceit on account of your spiritual attainments, just open your Bibles and read this chapter on charity. If it does not cure you of your malady, then you may be pronounced incurable. I, at least, am not physician enough to be able to prescribe a more suitable or potent medicine for your particular disease.

But the children of this new generation require something more than mere food and clothing. Whilst here they are strangers, in a strange land; nay, not only in a strange land, but also in an enemy's land. They are like the Israelites passing through the wilderness: they have not only serpents crawling about their feet, but also numerous foes on all sides of them. They are obliged to fight, therefore, in all their journeyings. Every day and hour of their lives is a scene of mortal combat. The children of light never know what it is to have an hour's peace; except, indeed, it be the peace which passeth all understanding; and this is a peace which, as their friends cannot give, so their foes cannot take away. And yet their whole desire is for peace. "Sweet peace is all they court or seek." They would not fight, if they could avoid it.

They are obliged to fight; but the best of it is they can fight when they are put to it. These children of the new creation are the greatest warriors in the world. Enemy after enemy assails them. Their foes are like the heads of the fabled giant: as soon as they are cut off, another crop springs up in their stead. The warfare seems endless, but still they fight on. Fight and conquer, fight and conquer, is the Christian's whole history. It is not conquer or die with him. If he fights manfully, he must conquer. It is only when he acts the coward that he falls. You see, then, that though a man of peace, the Christian is a warrior, and therefore requires armour—armour to protect himself as well as to assault the enemy. Now, God foresaw this exigency, and provided for it. He who gives the meanest thing that crawls a means of defence, was not likely to leave his newest and noblest creation undefended. "Take unto you the whole armour of God," says the Apostle. The *whole* armour of God. God does nothing by halves. He does not leave His sons and daughters protected in part, and in part exposed. He supplies each of them with a full suit of armour, which if they wear constantly, and use skilfully, they shall go on conquering and to conquer. Turn to the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and there you will find all the several parts of this armour described. There is, in the first place, a girdle for the loins—the girdle of truth. And only imagine what a firm, bold tread the Christian will have when he is begirt with truth as with a girdle. His very mien and majestic bearing will frighten the enemy. Then there is the breastplate of righteousness, to protect the seat of life. The serpent may bruise your heel, but he cannot

touch your heart, so long as holiness or righteousness stands between him and it. If you would have the heart invulnerable, therefore, pray God to make you holy. But, though holiness protects not the heel, the preparation of the Gospel of peace does. "Have your feet shod with this preparation," says the Apostle. Other warriors wear greaves of brass, but your greaves are to be made of the materials which the Gospel of peace has prepared. By wearing these, you will tread skilfully and safely amongst the thorns and brambles, and over the sharp and flinty paths in which the enemy will assail you. Next there is the shield of faith, on which the fiery darts of the Wicked One will fall in vain. What harm can all Satan's engines of war do the Christian, so long as he does not doubt God's promises? All his red-hot bolts are like sparks falling into the ocean—one hiss, and all is over. Above all these hope sits on the head, a glistening helmet; hope, ever bright and conspicuous in the day of battle; hope, from its towering altitude, looking far into the distance, and descrying the glittering crown of salvation awaiting the conqueror. In addition to all these, says the Apostle, "take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." This was the sword with which Christ conquered Satan in the wilderness, and the sword with which the Christian conquers him still. It is called the sword of the Spirit; for it is by its instrumentality that the Spirit wins all His victories. Whatever is wrought by any other instrumentality is not the work of the Spirit.

Thus we have found what the manner of life is of the children of this new creation. Their daily bread is supplied them from the Word of God. They are clothed

with humility, meekness, long-suffering, and charity; they are defended against their enemies by means of truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and hope; and they win their victories by a constant, skilful, and determined use of the sword of the Spirit.

Let us examine ourselves, and see whether we live the lives of those who belong to this new creation.

DISCOURSE XI.

PSALM II. 8, 9.

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

WE have already considered wherein Christ's sonship, by which He was begotten to the heirdom of the world, consists. We have seen that He was made Lord and Christ of the Gospel economy, when, having completed the work that was given Him to do,—having lived, and suffered, and died,—He rose from the dead on the third day. We have found the heir, therefore, and now our thoughts naturally turn to the inheritance. And, accordingly, the inheritance is expressly mentioned, and clearly and unmistakably defined. "Ask of me," says God, "and I shall give thee the *heathen* for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." As a Son, the nations of the world are said to be Christ's inheritance; but, as having purchased the kingdom by a stipulated agreement, they are called His possession. Christ not only inherits all His power and dignity as a Son; He possesses them as a buyer. "Thou art my Son," says God; "to-day have I begotten thee;

and therefore to thee belong, as a Son's portion, the nations of the world." But then, the very fact of God having raised up Christ from the grave (the begetting here spoken of) showed that He was satisfied with His performance of the engagement. It was a proof that Christ's work was done, and done, too, in a way pleasing to the Father; that He had paid the price, and therefore that to Him, of right, belonged the purchased possession. Ever remember this fact. Christ's power and dignity, as Head and Ruler of His Church and people, are His by a double right. They are His, as He is the heir of all things; and they are His, by right of purchase.

But observe,—God says, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee." They are Christ's, both by heirdom and purchase, and yet, before He can enter upon His inheritance and possession, He must ask them of God the Father. There is surely something very remarkable in this; something, too, from which we may, and doubtless are expected to, learn much. Recollect, that Christ, as the Head of His Church, is the great Exemplar of all His people. We shall learn more of ourselves, our duties and privileges, by studying the history and character of Christ, than by studying the whole Bible from beginning to end, without keeping that history and character in view. Christ is, in every respect, the Light of the world. Things that lie concealed, in spite of all the rays of reason and science,—nay, in spite of all the beamings forth of Christianity itself, apart from the person of Christ,—are all made clear and plain, when seen in the flood of His effulgence. Christ is, in this respect, as well as in respect of His eternal power and godhead, the express

image of the Father's person. It is by studying Christ's character and example that we can ever attain to a true knowledge of God. We cannot see God, for "no man hath seen him at any time;" but we see in His Son the image of His person. Christ, as the only-begotten, hath revealed Him, not only by His Word, but by Himself. In order, therefore, to know the only true God, we must know Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. God makes darkness His pavilion; clouds and darkness are round about Him; but His image is reflected in His Son. We look to the clouds and the heavens in vain; God is still unseen—a God that hideth Himself. We look into the face of Jesus Christ; and we find Him there. "He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father."

Here, therefore, by studying the history of Christ coming into His inheritance, as the Lord of the world, we advance one step in our knowledge of God Himself. We discover that, to obtain from Him even that which is ours by inheritance and purchase, we must ask it. We find that this is one of the conditions on which we can succeed even to that which is made over to us as heirs and possessors for ever. Christ has purchased an eternal redemption for us; He has paid the price, and that price has been accepted as satisfactory, as His resurrection from the grave testifies; but yet that redemption can never be enjoyed by us, unless we ask it of God. "All things are yours," says the Apostle; but, although all things are ours, we come into possession by asking, and if we do not ask, then the all things that are ours can never be ours. We are "joint heirs with Christ," and Christ is heir of the world; consequently we are joint-heirs with

Him of the world, and so it is promised that we shall possess the earth; but this consummation is to be brought about by asking, and not without it. Asking is the great condition on which God performs all His promises and engagements to His people. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee," was His language to His First-begotten; and "Ask of me, and I shall give thee," is His language still to the very poorest and weakest of His brethren.

And here I conceive we are to look for the secret of the efficacy and want of efficacy of prayer in general. People ask again and again, and yet do not receive, because God has not bade them ask. They have been disappointed in their hopes, because they did not ask "according to God's will." This disappointment has led some to entertain hard thoughts of God, as if He had been untrue to His promises, and others to doubt the Divine inspiration of the Bible altogether. The full and free invitation to ask and receive, to seek and find, to knock and find it opened, have induced some to think that God is bound to give them anything and everything they may be pleased to demand; and because they do not find their hopes realized, as they expected, they go away offended. Now, to clear up this matter a little, recollect, in the first place, that there is not one single promise in the whole Bible, from beginning to end, of God's readiness to listen to the prayers of any other than His own disciples. The blind man, who was restored to sight by our blessed Lord, spoke a great truth to the Pharisees when he said, "We know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a doer of his will, him he heareth." No wonder, therefore, wicked men are deceived and dis-

appointed, when they look for an answer to their prayers. Nay, even good men, when under the dominion of some besetting sin, will find that all their aspirations are too heavy to soar aloft. The sin with which they are entangled hangs like lead on their most fervent entreaties, and weighs them to the ground. "If I regard iniquity in my heart," says David, "the Lord will not hear me." David was a good man; but his experience had taught him this important truth, which, perhaps, it has taught many of us, that the hands must be washed in innocency, or we shall compass God's altar in vain. No wonder there are so many prayers lying in the dust, which, like letters in a dead-letter office, have never reached their destination. If we were only gifted with a second sight to see all those dead messengers of the heart which have been deputed to the skies, how we should stand amazed at the "mountains on mountains piled" of their withering carcasses! The unconverted man's prayers have no wings, and therefore cannot rise. They never leave their parent earth, for they are all earthborn. The prayers of the man who is renewed in the spirit of his mind are indeed winged, and would soar to their heavenly goal, if the secret sin in which he is entangled did not weigh them down. They are like chained eagles; their majestic wings are useless so long as the galling fetters of iniquity regarded in the heart bind them to the earth. Always suspect yourselves, brethren, when your prayers are not answered. Institute a search at once for the secret sin—the iniquity regarded in the heart—the hidden weight that renders all your aspirations earthbound. There is nothing should beget such anxious inquiry into our state with

God, as unanswered prayers. There must be something wrong. The fault is not in God: ever keep this in mind. If your prayers are not answered, the fault must be in yourselves. You have either asked things that you ought not to have asked, or you are still in a state of enmity with God, and therefore your prayers are an abomination in His sight; or you have been giving way to some besetting sin, and, consequently, your prayers have been unheard and unheeded.

I say, you may have asked things that you ought not to have asked. God is not bound to answer all the requests of even the righteous man. Our petitions must be according to His will, or they will be made in vain. You see the great necessity there is of trying to come to the knowledge of God's will. You see how incumbent it is on us all to study our Bibles, and, above all, the history, character, and example of our great Head, Jesus Christ. It is by these means, and these alone, that we can ever know anything of the will of God. "The prayer of a righteous man availeth much," says the Apostle; but then it is the "inwrought prayer." Our translation renders it, "the effectual fervent prayer," but "inwrought" expresses the Apostle's meaning better. Here, then, we have the prayer of the righteous man, and we are told that it availeth much only when it is inwrought—prompted by God Himself. When God says to the righteous man, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee," then the prayer that follows availeth much: it is inwrought—it is according to God's will. Hence the Psalmist says, "Thou preparest their heart, and thine ear hearkeneth thereto." (Ps. x. 19.)

The Prophet Isaiah speaking to the Church of the Gentiles which he saw arising fair and beautiful in the dim distance, says, "And all thy children shall be taught of God." (Isa. liv. 13.) If, therefore, the children of the Gentile Church shall be taught of God, they will know what to pray for; they will not, in their petitions to their Father in heaven, be permitted to ask amiss. "They shall be all taught of God," says the prophet. God shall say to them, "Ask of me, and I will give you such and such blessings," and, therefore, when they ask it shall be given them.

And how beautiful is the New Testament version of this great fact, that we are all taught of God. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities," says St. Paul, "for we know not what to pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." (Rom. viii. 26.) Here is the Divine teaching. The Holy Ghost teaches us to pray; and when we are taught of Him we shall not ask amiss. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought," says the Apostle; consequently, if we pray without the guidance of the Spirit we shall be sure to ask what we ought not. God promised that He would pour upon His Church the Spirit of grace and supplication (Zech. xii. 10); and here St. Paul testifies to the fulfilment of that promise—"The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us," he says, "with groanings that cannot be uttered." Here is the Spirit of supplication pleading within us. This life of the new-born soul agitates it with longings to which it cannot even give expression. But the mute language of this internal heaving is understood by God, and is well-pleasing in His

sight. "He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 27.) God reads in this tossing of the heart what the Spirit means. It is not necessary that these longings of the soul should be brought out in the form and shape of language; it is not to the lips that God looks; it is not to the tongue He listens; He searcheth the heart, and if He finds there desires begotten of the Holy Ghost He entertains them graciously and responds to them fully. The prayers which the Spirit instructs us to offer are sure to be heard, for "he maketh intercession for us *according to the will* of God." (Rom. viii. 27.) *We* know not what we should pray for as we ought; *He* teaches us how to pray because He knows God's will towards us. He is just God's voice speaking within us and saying, "Ask of me, and I will give thee such and such blessings."

See how all the parts of Holy Scripture hang together; and see how they all depend from Christ. Christ, as our great federal Head, must ask in order to receive even His own inheritance and possession; and, therefore, no wonder that in order to secure all that is purchased and inherited for us by Christ, *we* should have to ask also. "Ask, and I will give thee," is the proclamation of grace to all the sons and daughters of God Almighty.

Then another Scripture informs us that we know not what to ask as we ought; that the Spirit must inspire the request, or it shall not be listened to. And lest this information should dishearten us, there is a third, promising that God will pour out this prayer-instructing Spirit upon His Church and people. Nay, more, to leave no one room for complaining, there is a fourth—and it is the richest,

fullest, and best promise in God's golden page—namely, that God will give this blessed Spirit to all who ask Him. You see how simple the whole summing up of all the apparent complications and contradictions of this great scheme of salvation is! It all amounts to this, Ask God's Spirit to teach, guide and lead you, and you are safe. This is one thing you may pray for; you know you are asking according to God's will when you ask this—this guide is promised to all who are anxious for His guidance. And when the guide is found all the rest is easy. You have nothing to do but follow Him. He will lead you in safety and security through all the intricacies and windings which present themselves to your own dark sight. He will touch secret springs, and open up magnificent apartments, and show you such mines of hidden treasure as will make you cry out with amazement. Oh, it is a holy, glorious, and unspeakable privilege to follow the leading of this Divine guide through all that is lovely, rich, and dazzling which God's Word of revelation contains! A new landscape, each fresher and greener than the preceding one, presents itself at every turn; and vista after vista in endless succession breaks in on your view! No wonder men can see no beauty in the Bible when they presume to wander through its sacred pages without a guide! No wonder their darkened understandings believe a lie when they have not sought the illuminating light of Him whose exclusive task it is to guide them into all truth! They who try to discover all the counsel of God, without seeking the aid of Him whose peculiar province it is to show them the things of Christ, evince an utter ignorance of the very first principles of Christianity. No

wonder they fall into error and delusion. They are blind men groping their way over a country which mere man has never trod securely, and crying out against the treacherous pathway when they find themselves in the ditch. Why was an Illuminator and a Guide promised, if men might find their way without Him? The one great promise of the whole Gospel economy is that of the Holy Ghost to light up the path of Christ's Church and people. This promise is the very sun and centre of all that deserves the name of Christianity. Out of the influence of this sun and centre there is no life, no light, no heat. There is nothing but a cheerless, cold, and inanimate revolution in the gloom and silence of never-ending night! Brethren, let your prayers ascend for this gift of gifts—this sum and substance of living truth and guiding light; so shall your dark ways be made clear, and your path, like that of the just, shine more and more unto the perfect day.

But now consider what Christ will do to those nations which are given Him, on His request, as an inheritance and possession. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron," says God the Father, "thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Here Christ is brought before you as a monarch of irresistible sway, exercising an iron rule over those nations and kingdoms that fought against his legitimate sovereignty. We saw in a former discourse how Christ broke the nations with a rod of iron, when God "spoke to them in his wrath, and vexed them in his sore displeasure." Christ had to "break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms," before he could set up His own kingdom that was to last for ever. (Dan. ii. 44.) He would do this with a rod of iron, or with an iron

sceptre; that is, He would subdue His enemies, not as a conqueror merely, but also as a conqueror and a king.

Under what different characters is Christ brought before us throughout the Bible! Sometimes as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, despised and rejected of men; sometimes as a mighty warrior, coming with dyed garments from the slaughter of his enemies; sometimes as having no form nor comeliness, no beauty that we should desire Him; and sometimes as the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; sometimes as a king, meek and lowly; and sometimes as a monarch, great and terrible. In the Psalm under our consideration, it is this last character of Christ that is brought before us. He is represented as a king and a conqueror, crushing and subduing his enemies.

And now, mark the oneness of Christ and the believer. I have already observed that Christ is our great Exemplar. Whatever Christ, as the head of His Church, is represented as doing, that Christians may safely predicate of themselves, and regard themselves as the doers of it also. Who would have thought that this language of the Psalmist could ever have been applied to mere believers in Christ? It may be appropriately addressed to a kingly conqueror, but by what licence could it be addressed to an individual believer? Yet, strange as it may seem, it is so addressed. Christ Himself takes this very promise which His Father had made to Him, and makes it to every one of His faithful followers. Turn to Rev. ii. 26, 27, and you will read there: "And he that overcometh and keepeth my words unto the end (it is Christ that speaks), to him will I give power over the nations. And he shall rule them

with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father." Here Christ gives the very same power to every one that overcometh and keepeth His words unto the end, as He Himself had received. You see how He identifies Himself with His people; he regards His own power as theirs also. "He that overcometh," shall do all this, He says, "*even as* I have received of my Father." He alludes evidently to this very decree which we are considering, appropriating it to Himself, and making it extend to His disciples. Regard the Christian as an isolated individual, and you will find it impossible to understand this language of Christ. How has the poor, weak, humble, unassuming believer in Jesus power over the nations? How can such a one be said to rule them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like the vessels of a potter? It can only be by regarding him as one with Christ; by supposing that whatever is done by the head in this mystical body, is also done by the members.

I have already observed, that all this power and sovereignty were given to Christ as a reward of His obedience. He became obedient to death, and, therefore, God highly exalted Him, and gave Him a name above every name. Moreover, He became a Son by His resurrection from the dead, and to that Sonship was given the power over the nations. Now, when the same power is given to believers, it must necessarily follow that they are sons also—brethren of Him who is the First-begotten among them. Indeed, Christ evidently supposes this sonship of the believer, when He confers upon him its privileges. It is

as a younger brother of the great First-begotten, that the Christian can be said to have power over the nations.

What an illustrious brotherhood! To what a pitch of dignity and grandeur has this resurrection from the dead raised us up! From what a depth to what a height! How low once, how exalted now! The Eternal Son stooped from the glory of His Father's throne, plunged into the jaws of death, and came forth again with His myriads of new-born brethren, having torn them from the fetters in which sin had bound them. Here was love which evokes our gratitude till our hearts have ceased to beat, and for which all the gratitude we can render is a poor return. Here is love to which the thanks and praises of eternity are due, and which to thank and praise as it deserves, eternity were too short to do it in.

But Christ not only rose with His captives from the dominion of sin and death; He also bore them, as on eagle's pinions, to His own bright realms of life and glory. Was He himself raised up to sit at God's right hand in heavenly places? so also says the Apostle, "we are raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 6.) Will he be the Judge of quick and dead at His appearing? (2 Tim. iv. 1) so also, "the saints shall judge the world," says St. Paul; nay, "Know ye not," he adds, "that we shall judge angels." (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.) And, as in the place under our consideration, Christ shall break the nations with a rod of iron, so also shall His faithful followers do the same. Not only are Christ's merits ours, by which we are saved from the death of sin; but His

power, and majesty, and greatness, and all that He is as our exalted Head, are ours also. Did He become a King and Priest by virtue of His resurrection? so also, says St. John, "He that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, has made *us* kings and priests unto God and his Father." (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

As those "who have obtained this precious faith," forget not your high and holy privileges. See that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. You belong to the highest and noblest brotherhood in the creation of God, for the Son of God is your eldest brother. To you belong the most exalted offices that a created being can fill—you are judges of men and angels, and kings and priests unto God. Your priesthood, moreover, has a kingly dignity in it; like that of Melchisedec, and of Him who was greater than Melchisedec, it is a royal priesthood. Oh, then, show the world your royalty by your exalted bearing in the affairs of life—by your royal acts of mercy, love, and charity; and by your royal disdain of everything unworthy of your exalted birth. If you are brethren of Christ, take Him for your example; endeavour to be like Him in all things; and thus, and thus alone, your high calling shall never be disgraced by your unworthy conduct.

DISCOURSE XII.

PSALM II. 10, 11, 12.

"Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

WE have now arrived at the end of this Psalm; and I confess I have detained you in it a great deal longer than I had at first intended. When I began it I expected that it would occupy no more than four or five discourses at the most, and now I have come to the twelfth. I should feel that I owed you some apology for having kept you so long to one portion of sacred Scripture, were it not that I am convinced that the subject is of the very greatest importance. The soul naturally lingers over the page where Christ is the theme; and is there not something particularly satisfactory in finding Him so clearly and unmistakably brought before us in a book written so many hundred years before He was born into the world? Are we not able to lay hold, with a firmer grasp, of the promises held out to us in the New Testament, for having found Him who is the Author of those promises so vividly described in the Old?

See what full and overwhelming evidence we have in the pages of this blessed Book, that we are a redeemed

race, and that there is a happy home awaiting us when we shall have done for ever with the little perishing things of this world. It was not by chance that evidence was thus heaped on evidence, and proof on proof, that there is a heaven and a glorious immortality for the believer. It was the work of as pure and sovereign mercy to put within our reach the evidence that an eternal salvation is ours, as to plan and work out that eternal salvation for us. The love that induced our adorable Redeemer to inspire David to write this Psalm was the same as that which bore Him through all the horrors of Gethsemane, and enabled Him to endure the shame and torture of Calvary's cross. If men will persist in their lifeless course of scepticism and infidelity, the fault does not lie with Him by whose inspiration the Bible was written. There is sufficient light there to scatter all the clouds of doubt and disbelief, if men will only follow its guiding with a heart honest, and sincerely searching for the truth. He who cannot find all that the soul longs after in this Book of books, must have his understanding darkened indeed. If he will only pray for the Spirit to open his dark eyes, and show him the things of Christ, he shall then find a supply for the deepest and holiest wants of the immortal within him; for he shall find Him in whom all riches are stored up—Christ Himself. Christ is in this Psalm as plainly and clearly as the sun is in the sky at noonday. He is here, and yet there are thousands of our fellow-creatures who cannot see Him; or, if they can, why still live without God and without hope? If Christ is here, as we are sure He is, then no promise of His can ever fall to the ground, for He is God's Anointed; and we know that

God's Anointed cannot deceive. If this Son that we find in this Psalm be in very deed and reality the Jesus of Nazareth who lived, and suffered, and died some eighteen hundred years ago, then every promise that ever that Jesus of Nazareth made is as sure and stedfast as if God Himself had made it. It is impossible, it is inconceivable, that one who was the subject of prophecy, as Jesus Christ was the subject of prophecy, should, when He came into the world, teach aught but truth. And it is equally inconceivable that there should not be a correct account of His teaching and doctrine preserved for the use of those who should come after. Can we imagine that God would make all this great preparation for His Son's coming into the world; that He would give notice of His approach thousands of years before He arrived; that He would take such pains to describe Him so minutely, that none but the blind could possibly mistake Him when He did come; and yet, after all this surprising care and painstaking, permit an incorrect account of His teaching to be handed down to after ages? He that can believe this is the most credulous of all men. There is nothing in the whole range of Scripture half so hard of belief. Indeed, they who are called sceptics and infidels are the firmest believers in the world. They put the faithful themselves to the blush. If we believed God half so implicitly as they believe the devil, we should go on our way rejoicing, and Satan would lurk in our camp in vain. There is many a valuable lesson that the children of light may learn from the children of darkness.

The verses under our consideration to-day are what we may call the application of the Psalm. They are an

exhortation to the kings and judges of the earth to apply themselves to the study of their duties, and to attend to the word of instruction while they have still an opportunity of doing so. Christ has read to them the decree by which He is constituted King of all kings and Judge of all judges, and therefore He demands their fealty and obedience as a thing of right to Him, and of prudence to themselves. The kings of the earth had stood up, and the rulers had taken counsel together against both the Lord and His Anointed; and therefore to both the Lord and His Anointed kings and judges are summoned to make their submission; they are commanded to kiss the Son as well as to serve the Lord with fear.*

The word translated "be wise" signifies to *make one's self understand,* and is most appropriately applied to the great of the earth, who ought even more than other men to study the claims of Christianity, and to be aware of the penalties that attach to the rejection or disregard of it. And, thank God, many of the high ones of the earth have not been disobedient to the heavenly exhortation. They have made God's law their study; and the time has been, is, and shall be yet even more illustriously, when kings

* "Here it comes clearly out that the object aimed at, in reference to the punitive omnipotence of the Anointed, was to induce the revolters to flee from coming wrath by embracing His offers of grace and compassion."—*Hengstenberg.* On the contrary, the admonition is addressed, not to the kings and rulers mentioned in the Psalm—otherwise why not to the "heathen" and "people" also?—but to kings and rulers in general. Fealty and submission are demanded for Christ from all who are in authority, for the simple reason that He is constituted *universal* King.

and queens may be called nursing fathers and nursing mothers to the Church of Christ.

It is because Christ is held forth in this Psalm as a King and Ruler of the nations that the word of exhortation is addressed to kings and judges alone. It is His universal sovereignty that is the theme, and therefore the warning resounds forth to all those who dictate laws or administer justice, that *His* ordinances and statutes must be the rule and basis of all their proceedings. Although they are kings and rulers, yet they are only stewards for Him, for it is in His inheritance and possession that all their powers are exercised. From Him they hold their authority; for "by Him kings reign and princes decree justice."

That other word of exhortation, namely, "*Be instructed* ye that are judges of the earth," is just the Old Testament form of expressing that which John the Baptist, our blessed Lord, and His disciples taught when they cried, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It is the same kingdom, both here and there, that is going to be set up, and the same argument that is advanced for a reformation of life. In the one it is, "Be instructed or reformed (for so the word signifies), for the heathen are given to Christ as an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as a possession." In the other, "Repent ye"—be reformed—for this universal kingdom of Christ is about to be set up. The mind of that Spirit which dictated the language of the Psalmist was not changed a thousand years afterwards, when it dictated the language of the Evangelist. Men's sentiments vary from year to year; nay, they will often

contradict to-morrow what they assert to-day; but the great Instructor of the Church never changes. The mind that was in Him when He instructed the first saint in the way of salvation, will continue the same until the last saint shall have learned his last lesson. No matter in what age of the world we live, no matter on what point of the earth's compass our lot is cast, there is one unchanging Teacher for us all. When the redeemed of every land and every age shall have met in heaven, and the great and glorious family of the Firstborn shall have been completed, there shall be no jarring of views, no contrariety of opinions, in all that bright and happy circle. They will all have been brought up at the feet of the same great Teacher; they will all have learned the same lesson, and imbibed the same sentiments; and, therefore, the desire of their great Head shall be at last accomplished—they shall be one as He is one with the Father. They shall all speak the same language, too; they shall all sing the same song, and not one note of discord shall disturb the harmony of their ten thousand voices. Oh, it is a blessing which mortal tongue may not attempt to speak, to be taught, day after day, by this Divine Teacher, until we are fully instructed in the ways of godliness. To be thus prepared, to be thus fitted out, as it were, for the assembly of the redeemed, is one of those privileges conferred by God's mercy on His own ransomed ones, the thought of which fills the soul with wonder, love, and gratitude, not to be uttered. The heart sinks under the contemptation of such amazing mercy, and in the silence of its own melting thoughts, can only bow, and bless, and adore.

When Christ says in the eleventh verse, "Serve the

Lord with fear," it is easy to understand what is meant; but when he adds, "and rejoice with trembling," the meaning is not so evident. It is not easy to imagine how rejoicing can be joined with trembling in any circumstances. He who trembles can hardly be said to rejoice. We may fear and tremble; we may believe and tremble, as the devils do; nay, there is a trembling hope; but how we can rejoice and tremble it is difficult to conceive.* It appears, moreover, foreign to the tenour of the Psalm, to suppose that Christ exhorts the kings and judges of the earth to rejoice. He informs them of His appointment to the sovereignty of all nations, and on that ground claims their fealty and obedience, warning them of the consequence if they refuse to yield them; but there is not a word said, nor a suggestion offered, to lead one to expect these men to rejoice. Nay, in the very next verse He goes on to say, "Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and so ye perish"—still continuing, you perceive, to address them as persons who had not yet bowed to His yoke. Indeed, the whole scope of these three verses is to exhort the great of the earth to submit themselves to the Lord, and to His Anointed; and the word "rejoice" comes in awkwardly, and out of place. I have no doubt, therefore, that the passage ought to be translated thus—"Serve the

* "Pray with trembling." Chaldee. "Lay hold on him with trembling." Syriac. "Praise him with trembling." Arabic. The Sept. Vulg. Eth. Copt. and Arab. of the Prop. Fidæ, however, have, "*Exult* unto him with trembling." The following also give a similar rendering :—

"Et rejouissez-vous avec tremblement."—*Ostervald.*

"E gioite con tremore."—*Diodati.*

"Y alegraos con temblor."—*Valera.*

Lord with fear, and reverence him with trembling." The Hebrew word can bear this rendering,* and, moreover, it agrees with the scope of the Psalm. These are also the first emotions of the sinner returning to God, namely, fear, reverence, and trembling. It is only the advanced Christian who can rejoice. When we have first resolved to submit ourselves to the yoke of Christ, with what self-abasement we come before the throne of God! How vile we seem in our own eyes! How unprofitable, and worse than unprofitable, our past lives appear! When, having received the word of exhortation—when, having attended to the call, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,"—we essay to enter the Lord's service—what fear accompanies our efforts! what reverence! what awe! what trembling! We seem so worthless, and our services seem so worthless, that we can hardly be induced to believe that God will accept us on any conditions. Oh, there is no rejoicing in the first struggles to quit the ways of sin and Satan, and give ourselves up to God and Christ. There is too much self-abasement, too great a sense of our own unworthiness, and too little a sense of the pardon of sin and the spirit of holiness, to admit of rejoicing. The spiritual state of that man is much to be suspected who has become a convinced, converted, and rejoicing Christian all in a day.

To kiss the Son is to pay Him our homage; and so the kings and judges of the earth are here called on to bow themselves before Him as their King.† To "kiss

* See Gesenius under the word.

† The mistake of the ancient interpreters arose from their not perceiving that the word here rendered "Son" is Chaldee and

the Son," in the language of the Psalm, is to "take his yoke upon us," in that of the Gospel; and the meaning of both phrases is, to "do whatsoever he commands us." The very beginning and foundation of all true discipleship is to regard Christ's laws as binding on us, and to set ourselves heart and soul to obey them. Recollect we must kiss the Son if we would be saved by the Son. Christ is our King, and therefore if we, as His subjects, do not obey His laws, we must be punished as law-breakers and evil-doers. Many people have great delight in contemplating Christ as a priest to intercede for them, while they find no pleasure in regarding Him as a king to rule over them. But recollect that Christ's offices of Priest and King are inseparable. You cannot be partakers of the sacrifice that Christ has made as a priest, and

not Hebrew. It is used again in Proverbs xxxi. 2, no less than three times, where it can signify nothing but *Son*. The feminine form of it is also used in Cant. vi. 9, for daughter. (See Parkhurst under the word.) In Hebrew the word signifies *pure, clear, bright*, or *unspotted;* but as neither of these significations is admissible in this place, the LXX, followed by the Vulg. Arab. Ethiop. and Copt., gave what they conceived the meaning, rather than a translation, of the passage. They render it, "Apprehend discipline (*δράξασθε παιδείας*, apprehendite disciplinam, &c.), lest the Lord be angry, and ye perish from the right way." The Targum also gives a similar meaning, "Receive instruction lest he be angry, and ye lose the way." The Syriac is the only ancient version that agrees with our English "Kiss the Son," &c. Aquila gives *καταφιλήσατε εκλεκτως*; and Symmachus, *προσκυνήσατε καθαρῶς*, which Flam. Nobilius renders respectively *osculamini electe* and *adorate pure*.

The following modern versions agree with our own :—

"Rendez hommage au Fils."—*Ostervald.*

"Baciate il figliuolo."—*Diodati.*

"Besad al hijo."—*Valera.*

not subject yourselves to the laws He administers as a king. If Christianity confers great privileges, remember it also entails great duties; and its duties and privileges go hand in hand. It is a very common thing for those who have a little Christianity to recur continually to the privileges of the saint, while they altogether overlook the duties of the sinner. They will discourse with great satisfaction on the sonship of the believer, his completeness in Christ, and on the impossibility of anything being laid to the charge of God's elect, while there will not be one word of humility, meekness, mercifulness, charity, and such-like graces as always adorn the true Christian. This is bad enough; but it is still worse to meet with those (for we sometimes do meet with them) who have not a single mark of the religion of Jesus in their whole character, and yet can contemplate, with a sort of satisfaction, the privileges which belong to the Christian alone. The natural heart of man is indeed deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; but surely it is its master deceit to persuade those who are still under the dominion of sin and Satan that they are heirs of the inheritance of the sons of God. It is sad to meet with those who believe in their hearts and souls that they are saints, and yet differ in no respect, except, indeed, in a loud and ostentatious profession, from what they had been before that which they call their conversion took place. Indeed, there are so-called saints in the world for whom it would have been much better if they had remained sinners all their days. Their conversion, as they are pleased to term it, has only filled them with spiritual pride and self-conceit, and deprived them of any little charity they may have

previously possessed. We know that the basis of all true Christianity is humility; but if you studied Christianity from the character of those men I speak of, you must inevitably come to the conclusion that pride is its foundation, and uncharitableness its topstone. You will always find such Christians as these very loud and sonorous on the faults and failings of others, especially of those who happen to differ from them in their particular ways of thinking. They will sigh over the degeneracy of human nature as if their commiseration of it were so intense that they could hardly refrain from tears and groans. And yet if you inquire in what respect they themselves differ from the rest of the world, you will find it very difficult to get an answer. Do other men seek the things of the world? so do they. None of their unconverted neighbours will show greater cleverness in striking an advantageous bargain. There are none for whom gold and silver, worldly distinction and influence, have greater attractions. Strange that things of earth should seem so precious in the eyes of those whose treasures are all in heaven! Always suspect your Christianity, brethren, if it does not bear fruit in your lives. If it does not make you differ from other men, it is not the religion of Jesus. It is only a counterfeit—a device of Satan, who, instead of bread, has made you contented with a stone. Ever remember that Christ is a King to rule as well as a Priest to atone; that He has laws to be obeyed as well as privileges to be conferred; and that your obedience to the one is the inseparable condition of your enjoyment of the other.

It is not clear what is meant in the 12th verse by the words, "And ye perish from the way." Our Prayer-

book version has it, "And so ye perish from the *right* way." But there is no word for "right" in the original; and, moreover, the people here addressed are supposed to have not yet entered on the right way, for they are exhorted to do so. The danger of their perishing is said to be in Christ's wrath kindling, and the meaning appears to be this: Christ is spoken of as a universal King, and consequently the kings and judges of the earth are called on to do Him homage and offer Him submission; but if they still refuse to do so they shall be cut off, and so removed out of *His* way.* Christ's sovereignty must extend from shore to shore, and all who will not submit to that sovereignty must be removed by excision. They must be cut off—they must perish from Christ's way. This interpretation appears to agree with the tenour of the Psalm.

We have Christ here expressing the very same sentiment as He did more than a thousand years afterwards, when in the parables of the Gospel He said, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." (Luke xix. 27.) You see how in the Psalm and in the Gospel the same great doctrine is brought out, namely, that final and inevitable destruction must be the lot of those who will not submit to the laws of Christ. When men will not, in the language of the Psalmist, "Kiss the Son," or,

* The Syriac has, "And ye perish from *His* way."

It is added, "If his wrath be kindled but *a little*." "*Suddenly*," perhaps would be better. The thought seems to be akin to that of the Apostle, "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then *sudden* destruction cometh upon them." (1 Thess. v. 3.)

in that of the Evangelist, "will not have this man to reign over them," no matter what their professions are, no matter how they cry, "Lord, Lord," a sure and terrible ruin awaits them. It will not be only His openly declared enemies, but His professed friends also, who say, and do not, that Christ as an avenging King will tread in His anger and trample in His fury.

After these threats against Christ's enemies, the Psalmist concludes by holding forth a blessing to His friends—"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." Here is the evangelical doctrine of faith brought before you. To believe in Christ is to put your trust in Christ, and to put your trust in Him is to believe in Him. Trust is faith, and faith is trust. See how, in both the Psalm and the Gospel, the trusting state is, by way of distinction, the blessed state. It is blessed in many points of view. It is blessed, inasmuch as it is the only safe state. When Christ shall come to take vengeance on His enemies with kindled wrath, the mountains and the rocks will be but a poor protection against His scorching, exterminating anger. The only safety then will be found in the soul clinging to Christ with devout and confiding trust.

But it is blessed in itself, without regard to the safety it affords. The trusting state would be the happiest state, even if there were no danger to escape. There is more true joy in clinging to Christ, and depending on Him, receiving daily of His grace, and tasting of His love, than in anything else that you can conceive. This is the greatest heaven that the saint can enjoy on earth; and, with some modification, it shall be his greatest heaven in the skies. It is by trusting in Christ that we can ever

receive of His fulness. By trusting in Him we derive something from all that is lovely and excellent in His Divine character. Trust is the channel through which a portion of all and each of His heavenly graces flows into us. Hence there is a deep, secret joy, and holy serenity, in simply trusting in Christ, because we are then inhaling, as it were, the sacred breath of the heavenly atmosphere. The pleasures of religion do not consist in the reflection that we are saved from the punishment and wrath of condemnation. Reflections like this are a small, if, indeed, any, part of the Christian's joys. He has advanced but a short way on the road to heaven, who has nothing to cheer his heart but the thought that he is out of hell. He knows little of Christ's love whose greatest anxiety is not to know more. They are blessed who put their trust in Him, not so much because that trust makes them safe, as because it makes them heavenly-minded. The realization of Christ's love is the very heart and soul of their blessedness; it is its sunshine, before which all other considerations vanish or grow dim.

> "Oh, 'tis not in grief to harm me,
> While thy love is left to me;
> Oh, 'twere not in joy to charm me,
> Were that joy unmixed with thee."

Here is something for the doubting, troubled soul to lay hold on in the hour of its trial—this Psalm which we have now considered. Here, Christian, is thy hope, thy stay, thy all, brought before thy wistful eyes by the pen of Israel's king. Here is a light shining in a dark place, to which the sons of light may come, and bask themselves in its beams. Away, then, with doubts and fears, and

dark forebodings. Our Christian hopes are built on a rock. The foundation of our faith is firmer than the everlasting hills. Heaven and earth may pass away, but this abideth ever.

Oh, then, there *is* a home and a country in the land of the "great departed!" The members of our broken circles, whom the grave holds in its embrace, are *not* lost to us for ever. There *shall be* a reunion—the circles *shall be* completed again—the lost *shall be* found! He whom we have found in this Psalm has gone to prepare a place for His own; He has promised it, and *He* cannot deceive. That place will soon be ready for our reception. Tens of thousands have already entered, and found room, for there are many mansions there; and we shall soon follow them, for there is room for us also. Our loved ones are looking out for our coming. They are counting the days and the weeks until heart shall touch heart once more, and the circle of earth be re-formed, an unbreakable circle, above.

To Him then, who, in His unfathomable love, has begotten us to such hopes as these, let us, during the short period of our remaining pilgrimage, offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; let us bring Him our deepest love, our truest service; and while still mingling with the things of time, let us learn the everlasting song, which the redeemed of every age, and nation, and tongue shall sing throughout the ages of eternity.

DISCOURSE XIII.

PSALM XLV. 1, 2.

"My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever."

I INVITE you to-day to the consideration of another song, written of Christ far back in the world's history. I say *far back,* for although it is comparatively modern when compared with the songs of Moses and Miriam, it was composed by the inspired penman many years before the oldest writer of heathen antiquity saw the light. When we make inquiries concerning the birth and birth-place of old Homer, the father of Grecian poetry, we are lost in uncertainty, and grope for facts in vain. His very age has thrown a veil over everything connected with him, which no ingenuity or learning may remove; and it is still a debated point whether we ought to regard him as a man or a myth. Even those who place him farthest back in the dusky morning of young time, give him a date at least a hundred years later than that in which this Psalm was, in all probability, written. Thus the grandfather of the man whose writings are the very first dawn of antiquity itself, may have been gamboling, a thoughtless boy, in the streets of one of the villages or towns of Greece, when this

Divine song of Israel's Lord was sung in Israel's great congregation.

We use an incorrect phraseology, therefore, when we speak of the *old* religions of the world in contradistinction to the Christian, as if it were *new*. The Christian religion is the oldest of all. It was the first, and it shall be the last. It is not necessary to go to the Evangelists and Apostles in order to find the religion of the Christian: that religion is enshrined in these songs of Israel's sweet singers, as fully and as unmistakably as it is in the Gospel of St. John, or the Epistles of St. Paul. Christ is here, in spite of all gainsayers. The adorable One, who shed His blood for us, and who has given us such glorious promises and blessed hopes, is in this Psalm, if He is in any part of the New Testament. Try if it will suit any other of the sons of Adam's race. Bring Solomon, for whom some say it was written—bring him to the standard of this language, and see if he will come up to the measure. Choose whom you will of all whose names history records, and chant this song in his praise, and see if your conscience will not give the lie to your tongue. Sing it of Christ—of Him whose very name should send a thrill of joy and love through your hearts—Him whom we hang by, as He points us to the heaven of the redeemed in the distance, and then you will find that the song suits the subject, and the subject the song. It is dressing a dwarf in the armour of Goliath to apply this Psalm to Solomon, or, indeed, to any other of the mere sons of men.

It is called in the title, as you may see, "A Song of Loves." Christ is here brought before us in His house-

hold—a King in the company of His Queen and Royal Court. In the second Psalm, we had a Monarch enthroned in His Royal seat, in spite of all the craft, power, and opposition of a universally-organized rebellion: in this He is not only enthroned, He is surrounded by a princely family, and a rejoicing retinue. The song whose burthen is the glorious union of Christ and His people may well be called "a song of loves."* You see here that great

* This Psalm is generally regarded as a nuptial song. "The expressions, 'upon lilies'—*i. e.*, upon lovely brides—and, 'a song of the beloved,' in the superscription, are quite decisive in favour of its being a nuptial song."—*Hengstenberg.* The superscription of a psalm, however, is sometimes a very uncertain foundation to build an argument on. It is by no means certain that *shoshannim* signifies lilies, nor even, if it were, that "upon lilies" signifies "upon lovely brides." Our English translators, and others, as Venema, Ostervald, Diodati, and Valera, have left the word "shoshannim" as they found it. Others, as Dathe and Rosenmüller, render the words "in hexachordo," *i. e.*, to be sung on the hexachord, which is also Grotius' sense of them. The Septuagint and Vulgate render, "For those who shall be changed" ("Pro iis qui commutabuntur"), apparently understanding it to be some direction regarding the alternating of the verses by the singers. The Targum—"For the assessors of the Sanhedrim of Moses."

But even if it could be shown that the words signify "upon lilies," it would not follow that the song must necessarily be a nuptial one. Indeed, there is not a word said either of a marriage or of "lovely brides" throughout the whole of it. The "queen and honourable women" were already in the king's palace when brought under the Psalmist's notice; the marriage had, therefore, been consummated, and consequently is not contemplated in this Psalm. We shall also see that the idea of marriage is not necessarily associated with the subsequent procession of the "king's daughter" and "the virgins her companions" to the king.

Evangelical truth which many professing Christians, and perhaps some sincere professors, seem to have never fully understood—namely, that love is the bond of union among all the members of Christ's family. Here you have the very pith and marrow of Christianity lying like an enshrined pearl in the very title of this Psalm. It is a song of loves; and the scene of these loves is laid in a period of the Church's history when Christianity shall have reached, or almost reached, its highest stage of perfection. The Spirit's finger pointed the prophet's eye to a point of time which the world has not yet reached, when it showed him the scene of loves described in this Psalm. The writer looked far beyond the duskiness and coldness of these lukewarm times of ours, and fixed his gaze on a far brighter, happier, and nobler scene. He did not deign us a single glance as we lay dim and obscure in the foreground, but contemplated with wonder and joy the heavenly group that adorned the hill-top in the distance.

What a range of vision the Spirit confers on those whom He thus raises aloft, puts the telescope of prophecy into their hands, and points out to their admiring wonder the far-distant mountains! Nor need we doubt that an equal power of vision is conferred on those whom He has gifted with the art of discovering the wonders and mysteries with which they are immediately surrounded. In other words, brethren, it is the same illuminating Spirit that must enlighten *our* minds to see the things of Christ that are already come, as enlightened the mind of the Psalmist to see those things which were so far away in futurity. The Spirit that showed the Psalmist this scene of loves of Christ and His Church

must show us also the loves of their mysterious relationship, or, in spite of all our search and inquiry, we shall never discover them. There is not one glimpse of light, past, present, or future, but such as He is pleased to give: and whether He lights up the future, or the present, or the past; whether He makes a man a prophet, or a Christian, or both; it is of His own will and pleasure He does it, and it is of His sovereign bounty that He does it all.

I have said that some expositors apply this Psalm to Solomon. They say it was written on the occasion of his marriage with Pharaoh king of Egypt's daughter; and that it is an epithalamium, or marriage-song, celebrating their nuptials. Let me now, therefore, direct your attention to one or two things in this Psalm which are *not* true of Solomon, and cannot be applied to him by any stretch of poetic licence.

In the first place, the king spoken of here was a warrior, as is evident from the third verse, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty." And again, "Thy arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee." (Ver. 5.) Now we all know that Solomon was no warrior; it is more than probable that he never fought a battle in all his life. And you recollect it was for this very reason that he was chosen of God to build the Temple. God would not permit David to build the Temple; "for," said He, "thou art a man of blood;" and consequently the work was committed to Solomon, as being a man of peace.

Again, the sixth verse is totally inapplicable to Solomon,

and, indeed, to any mere man:—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." It is in vain that the Socinians, who deny our Lord's divinity, and the non-Messianic expositors, try to bend this text so as to make it fall in with their particular views. Their ingenuity is foiled in the attempt. They might as well try to remove the sun from the firmament, or convince common sense that it is not the sun. Those who would make Christ a mere man carry their own condemnation with them so long as they do not cut this verse out of their Bibles,—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

Again, the sixteenth verse is not true of Solomon, namely, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands." We read of no son of Solomon ever becoming a prince of any sort, except Rehoboam who succeeded him.* If, therefore, the Psalmist spoke of Solomon, he is proved to be a false prophet by the event; a conclusion which I suppose no one is prepared to admit.†

* I argue here on the generally received opinion that the promise is made to the *king*. But the argument becomes still stronger, if we understand it to be made to the *consort*, as I conceive we ought to do. So far from the children of Solomon's Egyptian wife becoming "princes in all the earth," it does not appear that she ever became a mother; and, so far from her name being "remembered from generation to generation," I am not aware that her name is even known.

† Venema gives another argument for the Messianic import of this Psalm, viz., the fact of its having been used in the worship of the sanctuary. If we conceive a nuptial ode written by some flattering poet for one of our late kings, introduced into the public Liturgy of our Church, we shall be able to see the absurdity of understanding this Psalm as written of Solomon.

The Psalm, therefore, was not written of Solomon, and no expositor worthy of notice has ever applied it to any other than Solomon and Christ; consequently, we have no hesitation in regarding it as a direct prophecy of Christ, and of Christ alone.

The Psalmist begins by informing us how his heart is labouring under the subject-matter of this song. He calls it a "good matter," and informs us how his heart is boiling or bubbling up (for such is the force of the word here rendered "inditing") with his theme. Here you have the work of the Spirit of prophecy. By His operation, the "good matter" is engendered in the Psalmist's bosom, and now his heart is heaving and labouring under the load. It is just beginning to throw it up, like water from a fountain, that it may flow off in the channel of the tongue. Here, therefore, you have some insight given you of the manner of the operation of the Spirit in the heart of man. The Psalmist says his heart is doing what the Spirit is doing in his heart. The heart does it, indeed, but it is the Spirit's working. The Psalmist took all the interest and pleasure in his subject that he could have done, if the Spirit had had nothing to do with it; for when the Spirit works, He works not only by the heart, but in the heart; he seizes upon all its affections, every fibre of it is bent to His will.

Here, then, is the preparation of the heart, and now follows the answer of the tongue—the tongue expresses what the heart dictates. The "good matter" with which the Psalmist's heart was labouring, he had reduced to form—he had given it shape and consistency, and he tells us that it concerns the King, and that he is going to give

it utterance. The ancient Jewish expositors tell us that wherever the single word "king" occurs in the Psalms, without any other word to determine its application, King Messiah is invariably meant. I do not, however, build on this rule; what I have already advanced, is sufficient proof that the king of this Psalm is no other, and can be no other, than King Jesus. No wonder, therefore, the Psalmist calls it a "good matter" that is rising in his heart, when it concerns Him who is the hope and joy of our race. This is the theme of all themes. Thousands of hearts have heaved with it in all ages of the world. Millions of hearts have spoken their songs of praise and love and adoration to this all-glorious King, though few have ever been privileged to give utterance to a song like this.

This work, says the Psalmist, touches the King. It does not all concern the King immediately, for much of it concerns the Queen, and about one-half of it is directly addressed to her. But it relates to Him, inasmuch as it relates to His family. Christ ever identifies Himself with His people; so that whatever is done to them, is done to Himself. Their interests are His.

Then, that there may be no doubt in the reader's mind that the "good matter" shall be enshrined in all its integrity in this "song of loves," the Psalmist tells us that the words of his tongue shall be no random and unguarded utterances. "The preparation of the heart, as well as the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord," says Solomon; and the sweet singer of Israel informs us that he experiences the truth of the proverb in his own particular case. "My tongue," he says, "is the pen

of a ready writer." That is, it is the pen of a skilful scribe—a master hand, whose copies are, as it were, fac-similes of the original, they are so truly and faithfully transcribed. The tongues of some men are no certain index of their thoughts—the matter that is boiling and bubbling within, for they know not how to bring it forth in the shape of articulate language. "But," says the Psalmist, "it is not so with me. My words shall be the very echo of my thoughts. Do not think that the Spirit of God has filled my heart with this glorious theme, and then left me to spoil it in the expression; my tongue shall be as much under His control in speaking it, as my heart in inditing it." Here, brethren, we are led into some of the secrets of the prophetic school. We have a peep, as it were, behind the scenes. We see not only the heart, but the tongue also, under the direction and control of the great Prompter.

The prophet having thus introduced us to his subject, and informed us that what he shall speak may be relied on, as a faithful expression of the promptings of the Spirit within him, now turns off abruptly, and addresses the King himself: "Thou art fairer," he says, "than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever."

The first part of the verse alludes to Christ's character, and not to His person. We have no reason to suppose that Jesus of Nazareth was distinguished, like Saul among the Israelites, by His personal appearance, from the rest of his countrymen. There is, indeed, a strong tendency in the Christian's heart to conceive of Him, even as a man, as the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether

lovely. But this is a subject on which curiosity may rack itself in vain. The Bible leaves us nothing to lay hold on. In all its pages there is not one word let drop to lead us to infer whether the Saviour of the world was fairer than the children of men, or without all form, comeliness and beauty. And, indeed, we have nothing to do with Christ's personal appearance. Whether He was fair, or without beauty, may have been interesting to those who saw Him in the flesh, but could not in any way concern those who came after. We know that His glorified body shall be beautiful—"fairer than the children of men"—when we come to look on it; but, whether His unglorified body was fair or otherwise, as that is a question of no importance to us, so the Word of God has left it unanswered.

Jesus seemed fairer than the children of men, adorned as He was with all the gifts and graces that add beauty and loveliness to the human character. When we at this distance of time look back to the days of our Lord on earth, and consider Him in the different circumstances in which He is brought under our notice, He seems the most lovely and perfect character that the mind can conceive. We see Him going about doing good with all the unselfishness that can attend on goodness. His enemies pursue Him day after day, with unrelenting malice, plotting to accomplish His ruin; and yet He weeps over their impending desolation. An erring sister is brought before Him by those whose guilty consciences will not permit them to cast the first stone, and He who is purity itself does not condemn the wretched transgressor. When we hear Him saying to the sinner who could sink no

deeper in sin, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more," then, indeed, Jesus of Nazareth seems to us fairer than the children of men.

Christ's meekness under His sufferings was another fair feature, which, no doubt, added its lustre to the lovely form which the prophet saw in his enraptured vision. It is not to be wondered at, that He who was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth," should seem fairer than the children of men when descried by the prophetic eye in the far distance. There is more beauty in that "dumbness" of the suffering Redeemer, than, perhaps, in anything else recorded of Him in the whole range of Scripture. Innocence taking patiently the wrong and contumely heaped on its head; when reviled, reviling not again, but committing its cause to Him who judgeth righteously, is a thing of beauty almost too bright for the eyes of a dark, groping world. No wonder, therefore, the Psalmist exclaimed, "Thou art fairer than the children of men," when the Holy Spirit opened his eyes and showed him the purity, beauty, and refulgence of our spotless Redeemer.

But the Psalmist notices another characteristic of Him who is the subject of his song. He is not only fairer than the children of men, but there is a certain sweetness and persuasiveness in His speech which arrests the prophet's attention. "Grace," he says, "is poured into thy lips." Our Divine Lord's teaching attracts us as much as His character. Indeed they go hand in hand. Both are equally more than human; both point the mind to something higher than the children of men. When the

officers, whom the Pharisees had sent to apprehend Jesus, returned and said, "Never man spake like this man," they bore an unconscious testimony to the truth of this language of the Psalmist. When the people in the synagogue of Nazareth "wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth," they were only witnessing what the prophet had witnessed a thousand years before, when he exclaimed, "Grace is poured into thy lips."

You observe that Christ's character and teaching are the two first things that offer themselves to the prophet's observation. And if you reflect a moment you will see that they are the very two things that first offer themselves to the world. All that follow these two things in the Psalm, follow them in the experience of mankind. Christ's example and Christ's instruction come first; if these fail in their object then we must look for Christ's sword and Christ's arrows. The Psalmist, you observe, contemplates our Divine Lord as the model man and the great teacher first; these are His most obvious and prominent characteristics; it is only on further consideration that he discovers Him to be a warrior with His sword girt on His thigh, and clothed with the glory and majesty of a conqueror. Happy they who shall never have known Jesus Christ in any other character than that of an exemplar and instructor! Theirs will be an ignorance which may well be called bliss.

Observe, it is said, "grace is poured into thy lips," as if this grace were a gift, and not something inherent in our Lord Himself. And is not this exactly what we learn from the histories of the Evangelists? Before Jesus went

forth to the work of His public mission, the Holy Ghost descended from heaven like a dove and lit upon Him. The Spirit who imparts all its graces to the Church of Christ, imparted His graces to Christ Himself. Not that the Son of God needed the anointing of the Spirit of God, but He suffered it to be so that He might be in all things like His brethren. If He was to be their example, He must show them wherein their great strength lay. They see in Him the fruits of the Holy Ghost who is promised to themselves. All that Christ ever did as the Head and Representative of His people, He did by that very Spirit which is still resident in His Church.

It is not very evident how we ought to understand the words that follow, namely, "Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever." The difficulty is in the word *therefore.* Are we to understand that Christ's eternal blessedness is a reward of the perfection of His character and His accomplishments as a great teacher? Is it *because* He is fairer than the children of men, and grace is poured into His lips, that God has blessed Him for ever? This may be the Psalmist's meaning. St. Paul expresses a very similar sentiment in Phil. ii. 8, 9, when he says, Jesus "humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him"—speaking, you perceive, of Christ's exaltation as the reward of His humiliation.

But there is another way of understanding the words under our consideration which I am inclined to think preferable to this one. The word translated "bless" also signifies *to make prosperous,* and therefore the meaning may be, "God hath prospered thee, that is, hath prospered

thy cause, for ever." Christ's character and teaching are the source of the Church's prosperity. The Holy Ghost indeed carries on the great work in the world; but it is by taking of the things of Christ and showing them to men. He shows us the beauty of Jesus and thus inclines us to love Him; He calls to our remembrance the words of Jesus, and thus induces us to serve Him. It is what Jesus has done and spoken that is the source of all life and energy in the Christian world. And therefore it may be said that it is because He is fairer than the children of men, and grace is poured into His lips that God hath blessed Him, that is, hath prospered His cause, for ever.

See here, Christian, how thou art joined in to eternity! Whether it be Christ or His Church that is blessed for ever, it is all alike to thee; for Christ and His Church are united, and the blessedness of the one must ever be the blessedness of the other. All the Christian's interests and associations are eternal; all connected with him is measured by eternity. *He* is not a creature of time, and His portion is not amongst the things of time; nor do His prospects even begin within time's small circle. There is nothing poorer than "God's blessing" and "for ever" in the Christian's sunny lot. And who has heaped all this glory on thy head, thou thing of dust and ashes, that thou shouldst thus lay thy hand on eternity's sunshine and call it thy own? Who but He whose praises this unknown Psalmist learned to sing when time itself was young? Who but He whose praises our own lips are privileged to sing day after day? Who but He whose praises shall yet be sung in every nation and kindred of this world's compass? Who but He whose

praises angels and angelic men shall sing whilst eternity's circles shall continue to roll? It is He who has done it all—the adorable Jesus—the fairer than the children of men—the blest for ever: the work, the whole work, is His.

To Him, then, be ascribed, with grateful hearts, all glory, blessing, majesty, might, and dominion, now and for ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE XIV.

PSALM XLV. 3, 4, 5.

"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee."

IN the two first verses of this Psalm our blessed Lord is brought before us as the perfect man, and the great Teacher. In the three verses that I have just read His character is quite changed; He is no longer our teacher and example, but a mighty warrior equipped for battle. In order to understand this change of figure, you are to imagine that the whole history of Jesus Christ, as the Messiah, is brought before the Psalmist's eyes as in a sort of panorama. The figure changes at every change of scene—that is, at every introduction of Christ in a new character. In the two first verses we have understood the Psalmist as contemplating our Divine Lord in the flesh: this vision was a portraying of the man Jesus in those characters wherein He excelled the other sons of Adam. In the three verses under our consideration to-day Christ has risen from the dead; the blessing with which God has blessed Him for ever has begun to be conferred; He is a

hero now, begirt with glory and majesty, and rides forth on His glorious errand of evangelizing the nations.

The vision here vouchsafed to the Psalmist bears a close resemblance to that mentioned by St. John in the sixth chapter of the Book of Revelation; and, indeed, both visions appear to relate to one and the same subject. "I saw," says St. John; "and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer." I think there can be no doubt that He who sat on the white horse was Jesus Christ himself, and His going forth conquering and to conquer was His disseminating the truth of Christianity, before which the falsehood of heathenism was to fall like Baal before the ark. And there cannot be conceived a more beautiful figure whereby to describe the setting up of the kingdom of the Gospel in the world than this of an armour-clad warrior riding forth conquering and to conquer. Now the figure of the Psalmist, though somewhat differently expressed, is exactly that of the Divine. In both Christ rides forth sa a hero; in both He is bedecked with glory and majesty; and in both success attends Him—He is crowned with victory.

Now there is no reason to suppose that St. John borrowed his imagery from the Psalmist. Nor is it like a common-place figure that two different minds might employ, as it were, by chance, and there would be nothing surprising in the coincidence. It is one mind in a thousand, or rather in ten thousand, that would think of describing the progress of the Gospel by Christ's riding forth as a warrior begirt with armour. Here, then, we have a surprising coincidence; or, rather, a beautiful

and most satisfactory evidence, of the Psalms and the Book of Revelation having been indited by one and the same mind. It was the same great Illuminator that discovered Christ riding forth with His sword girt on His thigh, and shooting His arrows into the heart of His enemies, to the Psalmist, who showed St. John, more than a thousand years afterwards, the same Christ, sitting on a white horse, with a bow in His hand, and asserting His sovereignty wherever He came. Is there not something particularly pleasing in thus tracing the same Spirit, revealing the same Lord, under the same imagery, to the minds of God's servants at such far distant points of the world's history? I do not know a more convincing proof of the Divine inspiration of Holy Scripture than this wonderful agreement amongst the writings of men living in different ages, and writing under such different circumstances. And this agreement does not always lie on the surface; indeed, perhaps it seldom does. It is after you have removed the different dress with which different minds have clothed the heaven-engendered thought, that you find the same authorship in all. The gold is enshrined in a variety of casings, but it is all dug out of the same mountain.

In Revelation xix. 11—13, where St. John is speaking of another period of the Church's history, Christ is also represented as a horseman riding forth to subdue His enemies—"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man

knew but he himself: and he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God." Here is the same warrior, surrounded with the same dignity, and, as is evident from the following verses, attended with the same success.

The sword with which Christ is girt is, we need not doubt, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. "The Word of God is quick and powerful," says the Apostle, "and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." Now, if the Word of God be the sword which Christ will wield when He goes forth conquering and to conquer, it is evident that His shall be a spiritual warfare and spiritual victories. The weapons of His warfare will not be carnal, and therefore it will be the strongholds, not of men, but of Satan, that He will pull down. It will be everything that exalteth itself against the *knowledge of God* that He will cast to the ground; and it will be the thoughts, and not the individual, that He will bring into captivity to himself. God says in Jeremiah xxiii. 29 that "His word is like a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." Therefore, when Christ wields this formidable weapon, the hard, stony heart of man will be rent and dissolved as the rock of granite crumbles before the fire and the sledge. You observe, it is to the operation of the Word of God on the heart that the work of man's conversion is to be attributed. Nothing else is able to accomplish that work; and that is no conversion that is not wrought by this instrumentality. Remember, it is by this sword that Christ is said to fight and conquer in all His spiritual

battles; consequently, whoever is not conquered by the Word of God is not conquered by Christ. He is still His enemy—still unreduced to His yoke; and it will matter little in the day of vengeance whether such a man has been accustomed to regard himself as the subject of Christ, or the bondman of Satan.

This sword which Christ has girt upon His thigh, is sometimes said to go out of His mouth, in allusion evidently to the *spoken* word; and this is the sword with which Christ is said, in Rev. xix. 15, &c., to smite the nations. It was by the preaching of the Word that the old monarchies, where Satan ruled, crumbled before the advances of the Empire of Christ; and it shall be by the preaching of the Word that Christ's universal kingdom will be eventually set up in the world. This sword is called by the Psalmist, Christ's "glory and majesty," as being the sign of these, and the instrument whereby they are to be conferred upon Him. For in what do the glory and majesty of Christ consist but in the universal spread of His kingdom on earth, whereby millions of the human race, of all peoples, and nations, and tongues, are brought to submit to His laws, and render Him a grateful and cheerful obedience? As the bride is the glory of her husband, so is the Church the glory of Christ; it is the "fulness of him who filleth all in all." Wherever the Word of God is faithfully preached, therefore, and souls savingly brought home by its instrumentality, there glory and majesty are given to Christ—more jewels are added to His crown, and more greatness to His kingdom. To hide God's Word is to deprive Christ of His glory and majesty; and to rely on any other means of converting

souls than that Word faithfully explained, and well understood, is to deprive the Word of its great prerogative. Read this Word, brethren, as you value your souls' welfare. Study it. Pray over it. Let it be the guiding star of your journey, and thus you shall, by the saving of your own souls, bring glory and majesty to your conquering Redeemer.

The Psalmist proceeds in the fourth verse: "And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of the word of truth, meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." Or, as the passage might be, and perhaps ought to be, translated, "And in thy majesty prosper: ride on the word * of truth, meekness, and righteousness," &c.† I have already told you that the sword with which Christ is girt is the Word of God or the Word of the Gospel, and therefore appropriately called His glory and majesty. Now, says the Psalmist, "In thy majesty prosper." That is, "girt as thou art with the Word of God, which will assert thy

* Or, "because of," that is, "ride forth on the cause or business of truth," &c. Such is undoubtedly the meaning; but it is the *prose* meaning.

† The literal translation would be, "Ride on the word of truth, and the meekness of righteousness;" and so the Syriac has it. If this rendering be adopted, the meaning will then be, that the great object of Christ's Gospel was to vindicate the cause of truth and righteousness in the world. Christ is said to ride on the word of truth because the knowledge of the truth depends on the Word—it is by the Word that truth is made known: He is said to ride on the meekness or humility of righteousness, because meekness or humility is its distinguishing characteristic. The former relates to what man is to believe; the latter to how he is to live.

universal sovereignty, go on and be successful." Of course the words are prophetical, and only another form of saying, "Thou *shalt* be prosperous: it cannot be otherwise, armed as thou art with a weapon so quick and powerful."

Here, then, we have this mighty Man riding forth to conquer and subdue the nations with the sword of His own glorious Gospel. It is a majestic picture which the Psalmist draws before our mind's eye. It strikes the mind with awe, but not with terror; for this invincible warrior conquers not to destroy but to save.

Observe, Christ is said to ride forth *on* the word of truth, meekness, and righteousness, as on a chariot or steed. It is a bold figure; but the Psalmist having girt his Hero with the sword of the Gospel, may well encourage Him to ride on the word of truth, meekness, and righteousness, as on a war-horse. There is, however, a great truth underlying this figure bold as it is. Wherever Christ comes on His mission of mercy, proclaiming the good news of Bethlehem, Gethsemane, Calvary, and Olivet, there He comes on the word of truth, meekness, and righteousness. This rule is universal. There is not one single exception to it. Wherever, then, these things are not inculcated, lived, and acted, there Christ has not come with His all-conquering Gospel. We have here, therefore, an excellent test to try ourselves by (for we ought to be satisfied about ourselves before we apply the test to the rest of the world), and know whether the Gospel of Christ has come to us, "not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost."

First, Christ rides forth on the word of truth. Wherever

anything but truth is preached, or taught, or believed, Christ is not there. Nor is He in all truth but in *the* truth. It is the preaching and receiving of the truth as it is in Himself that is ever accompanied by Christ. He came into the world to bear witness to the truth, and it is the witnessing to the truth that shall ever be blessed by His presence and favour. All that are of the truth hear His voice, for to hear the truth is to hear Him, seeing that He is ever in its word and preaching. The truth that man is spiritually dead as a descendant of Adam, and needs pardon as well as life,—wherever this is taught, fully and unreservedly, Christ is there. The truth that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself and not imputing to them their trespasses,—wherever this is preached in all its grandeur and mightiness, Christ is there. The truth that man must be born again of water and of the Spirit, that life must be breathed into the death of his being, and that the Spirit of God alone can reanimate his lifeless soul,—wherever this is inculcated in all its literal meaning, Christ is there. The truth that if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and that His blood cleanseth from all sin,—wherever this is proclaimed in all its sweetness, grandeur, and integrity, Christ is there. And, also, the truth that though Christ died, and the Spirit is ready to new-create, yet unless men repent and seek forgiveness for by-past transgressions, they can never be forgiven,—wherever this is urged with love and faithfulness, Christ is there. Thus Christ rides on the word of truth; and wherever He so comes, there He touches men's hearts

with the sword of the Gospel, and reduces them to His easy yoke and His light burden.

After truth comes meekness, or humility, for so the word also signifies. And if you examine the order of Christian experience, you will find that humility follows immediately on the receiving of the truth. "We are alive without the law, but when the commandment comes sin revives, and we die." The heart of man is naturally proud and self-sufficient, and nothing can humble it as it ought to be humbled, but the bringing home to it the truth as it is in Jesus.

You perceive, therefore, the propriety of making humility follow next to truth, in these three things, in the preaching of which Christ and His Gospel are, as it were, conveyed to all parts of the world. The "humility" of the Psalmist corresponds, in a great degree, to the "repentance" of the Evangelist. Now, you are all aware how the first preachers of the Gospel went about preaching the necessity of repentance in order to the forgiveness of sins. When John the Baptist went forth to preach, the sum and substance of his preaching was, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." When our blessed Lord Himself went forth to preach, it was the very same cry that He raised in the ears of humanity, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And so also with His Apostles. You see, then, how Christ rode forth, as it were, on the word, or doctrine, or preaching of repentance or humility. Recollect this fact, brethren. Wherever the heart of man is not humbled, Christ has not appeared there as a conqueror, wielding the sword of

His all-subduing Gospel. The quick and powerful Word of God has not penetrated to the joints and marrow, or there would be an utter renouncing of self; there would be repentance, humility, meekness. Humility, therefore, is as essential to the Christian as truth. If all shall "be damned who obey not the truth," there will be no salvation for those who have not passed through the vale of humility. Recollect that it will not do to mourn and lament for our sins, and then get puffed up with pride and self-conceit, because we have, or fancy we have, been enabled to forsake some of those sins, and outstrip our less-favoured neighbours in the race. The humility that leads to spiritual pride is no true humility. It is only the devil's counterfeit. The devil himself will help you to avoid the sin that keeps you humble, and makes you more watchful, if he sees he can substitute a little spiritual pride in its stead. There is nothing he is so much afraid of as humility. He would gladly suffer you to be all but saints, if he could only puff you up with self-conceit. He could afford to see you walk on the very verge of heaven all your lives, with its valleys and hills in full view, if he were only satisfied that you were self-secure. It is only when he sees a man confessing himself the chief of sinners, like St. Paul, or crying for mercy, like the poor publican, that the terror of loss steals over him. He is far better satisfied, you may be sure, with some of those men who are never tired bemoaning the awful state of those whom they call their unconverted acquaintances, than with those unconverted acquaintances themselves. It is quite music to his ears to hear the uncharitable judgments of self-righteous, self-applauding men, on

their less ostentatious brethren. He encourages such piety, you need have no doubt; and laughs in himself, as he fans it, and makes it glow.

Again,—as humility follows on truth, so righteousness follows on humility. It is impossible that the order of any of these three things should be reversed, so as that we should have righteousness first, and humility afterwards, or humility first, and then truth. Truth leads to humility, and humility is the basis of righteousness; for there is no true righteousness that is not built on humility. Whether we speak of the righteousness of works, or the righteousness of faith, humility must precede it. We cannot lay hold on Christ as our only hope, until we have laid aside all pride and self-sufficiency; and we cannot do works well-pleasing to God—that is, righteous works—until we do them as members of Christ.

I apprehend we are to understand by the word "righteousness," in the Psalm, the same as is expressed by "works meet for repentance," or such works as follow on repentance, in the Gospel. It is the fruits, the good works, of those who have lain low in the valley of humility, and been enabled to lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel, that is meant. Now, when we read of Christ's riding forth on the word of righteousness, we at once discover that where there are no fruits corresponding to the Christian profession, Christ has not been there, as the conquering hero of the Psalm. But when professing Christians do the things that Christ commands them, as well as believe on His name, then, and only then, have we a reliable evidence that Christ has reached them in His triumphant course.

That teaching, therefore, that does not inculcate good works as the necessary fruits of the Christian profession, is not sanctioned by Christ's presence and favour; for it is on the word of righteousness, as well as that of truth and meekness, that He comes in His majesty, and reveals His irresistible arm to the nations.

Brethren, let us ask ourselves, has this "most mighty" One come to us on the word of truth, meekness, and righteousness? In the heavenly truths of His own Holy Book, have we felt His power and His love? In the lowliness and prostration of our humbled and contrite hearts, have we experienced His goodness and mercy? In our endeavours to live as becomes those who name His name, have we enjoyed the sweet sense of His gracious approval?

The Prophet, having thus represented his hero as girt with the sword of the Gospel, and riding forth on the word of truth, meekness, and righteousness, as on a war-chariot, next informs us of the success of His expedition. "Thy right hand," he says, "shall teach thee terrible things." The right hand is the emblem of strength and prowess. "God's right hand hath gotten him the victory," says the Psalmist; and again, "The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly;" "The right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass." Now, when it is said that Christ's right hand shall teach Him terrible things, or wonderful things,* as it may, and

* "For thy own right hand shall show thee wonders." —*Horsley.* Probably allusion is also made to the judgments which fell on the nations, when God, as in the Second Psalm, spoke to them in His wrath, and vexed them in His sore

perhaps ought to be translated, the meaning is, that His power and might will work wonders in the world. When Christ draws the sword that He has girt on His thigh, and wields it with His right hand, wonders shall be wrought which could hardly be believed until they had been witnessed.

And, brethren, may not the works which Christ has wrought in the world, by the instrumentality of His Gospel, be well called wonderful? Think how the nations, one after another, yielded to the preaching of the poor fishermen, and those who followed them. Why, the history of Christianity, for the last eighteen hundred years, is the wonder of all wonders. Nor is it more wonderful in the outward triumphs that it has achieved, and is still achieving, and shall yet achieve still more remarkably before its race is run, than in its inward victories over sin and sorrow in the hearts of men. See the poor wretch, Satan's bondman, wallowing in sin, and drinking in iniquity like water; is it not wonderful that such a one should ever become God's freeman, hating sin with a perfect hatred, and loving holiness more than life? Hear the groans of helpless humanity, as it stretches out into the gloom that surrounds it, feeling for something to lay hold on in the awful eternal: is it not wonderful that those groans should be turned into shouts of joy, that that something should be found, and

displeasure. The enthronement of Christ followed those judgments there, as it does here these wonders or terrors. In the 110th Psalm there is a similar connexion of events; it is after Christ has judged among the heathen, and filled the places with dead bodies, that He lifts *up the head.*

that a bright sun should arise in men's hearts to light up the darkness of eternity itself? Oh, when beauty is thus given for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, we may well exclaim, with the Psalmist; "Thy right hand, O Christ, has taught thee wonderful things." All the peace and comfort which the Christian experiences in this mortal life are the fruits of the victory of his beloved Lord over the kingdom of sin and Satan. The Christian is a wonder in himself,—the greatest, it may be, that the universe is acquainted with; his mere existence is the most wonderful of the wonderful things wrought by the right hand of his conquering Lord.

This Mighty One being thus equipped, and ready to sally forth on His glorious errand, the scene of the Prophet's vision moves forward, and discovers Him in action. He is rushing on, conquering and to conquer. The forces of Satan are drawn up in battle array, resolved, if possible, to impede His progress; but Christ rides on, and wherever He rides the Prophet's eye descries bowed heads and prostrate bodies, in the ranks of His foemen. While viewing this exciting scene, he exclaims, "Thy arrows are sharp; people fall under thee, in the heart (or midst) of the King's * enemies!" † The

* "The King's enemies," is not simply an expression for "Thy enemies," as some think, but rather implies that Christ's Kingship is the ground of their enmity; just as in the Second Psalm their cry was, "Let us break their *bands* asunder."

† This is the order and literal rendering of the Hebrew, and the word translated "heart" often signifies *midst*. (See Hammond, *in loc.*) The language may also refer to the judgments poured out on the enemies of Christ, spoken of in the 2d and 110th Psalms, and elsewhere.

sword which Christ has girt on His thigh, and the arrows which He shoots into the midst of His enemies, are one and the same thing—namely, the Word of God. When the Word of God is spoken of *as a whole,* it is the sword, the mighty instrument with which Christ subdues or evangelizes the nations; but when it is spoken of in reference to particular texts arresting men's attention, and wounding their consciences, then it is the arrows by means of which the people are made to fall under Christ, even in the midst of His enemies. Now, all men, in their natural state, are Christ's enemies, and consequently all those who are subdued to Christ's yoke are in the midst of enemies, when they are so subdued. When, for instance, on the preaching of Peter, on the day of Pentecost, so many of the hearers were pricked in their hearts, then the people began to fall, in the heart or midst of Christ's enemies, and under Christ's arrows. When, in a godless household, one or more of the inmates become anxious about their souls' welfare, then there is an instance of people falling under the sharp arrows of Christ, in the heart or midst of His enemies. They had been all enemies in that household—all rebels to Christ as a King; but the sharp arrows of conviction have pierced the heart of one or two, and these fall under Christ; they are taken captive, as it were, by His quiver and His bow.

Brethren, are we of the number of those who have fallen prostrate under this mighty conqueror? Oh, it is a glorious captivity to be made bondmen by Christ. It is an easy yoke that He imposes on His captives. It is a light burden that they bear who have been reduced to

His servitude. All His captives become His brethren. They are like Joseph in Egypt,—they are exalted to the highest dignity next to the Throne.

Subdue our rebellious hearts, thou Mighty Conqueror! Bring every thought into subjection to Thyself. Number us among Thy conquered ones. Bind Thy yoke upon our necks, and Thy burden on our shoulders, and make us what Thou wilt, only make us Thine own.

DISCOURSE XV.

PSALM XLV. 6, 7, 8.

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad."

HERE is the second change in the scene of the Prophet's vision. In my last discourse we saw how Christ had become a warrior from being our exemplar and teacher. In the verses which I have now read to you, the warrior as well as the teacher has vanished, and Christ has become a King. Here, then, we have the same order of events as we had in the Second Psalm, only seen in different points of view. It was after God had laughed at the nations that had set themselves in opposition to Christ and His cause, and punished them in His anger, that Christ was anointed King on His holy hill of Zion. And so here, it is after Christ has gone forth conquering and to conquer; after "His right hand has taught him terrible things, and his sharp arrows have pierced the hearts of the king's enemies," that a throne arises in the prophet's vision. Christ has worsted His foes, and brought many into sub-

jection, and therefore He now reigns over them as His subjects. His kingdom is one which He has won for Himself by His sword and His bow. He has fought and conquered, and therefore He now rests on His laurels,—a King on His throne.

There is something almost startling in the language with which the Psalmist here addresses the King. We are hardly prepared for it, it comes on us so abruptly. Our thoughts, indeed, had been raised very high, as we followed this sword-girt warrior riding forth on such a glorious errand, and perpetrating such wonderful deeds by His single arm; but they had not risen to the grandeur which was awaiting us. We saw a mighty conqueror, and at once perceived that He was something more than man; but we were not conscious that we were contemplating God Himself. Therefore when the Psalmist exclaims, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," we at once hold our breath, and read again to see whether we have read correctly or not. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!" Is it He, we ask, who was called fairer than the children of men, and into whose lips grace was said to be poured; He who rode forth with His sword on His thigh and His quiver on His shoulder? is it He to whom this language is addressed? Then the thought suggests itself that it may possibly be a mis-translation, or, at least, that the passage may be capable of another rendering; but when we go to the original, there is nothing there to lay hold on,—it is there as in our English, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," and no honest ingenuity of man can make anything else of it. The Socinians and non-messianic interpreters try to twist it, indeed; and I thank

the Socinians and non-messianic interpreters for the pains they have taken.* They have proved, better than a thousand arguments in its favour could have done, that it cannot be twisted. If any one has misgivings about the meaning of these words, he has only to learn how those men try to get rid of them, to set his mind at rest on the subject.

Our beloved Lord, therefore, on whom we rest our dearest and brightest hopes, is no less than God Himself, the Divine Elohim. It is He who has said, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," to whom the inspired penman addresses this overwhelming language, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." It is He who has promised, "I will give unto mine eternal life: they shall never perish; I will raise them up at the last day," whom the prophet describes as God seated on a throne which shall last as long as eternity itself. Oh, what a flood of heavenly light rushes into our souls as we bind the golden promises of the adorable Jesus with the Divinity that prophecy casts like a halo around His head! The truth, as it is in Him, breaks upon us with all the irresistibility of mathematical demonstration; the hopes of the Gospel

* Some would translate, "Thy God's throne is for ever and ever;" others, "Thy throne is God's for ever and ever;" others, "Thy throne is God, and he is for ever and ever;" and others, "Thy throne is God for ever and ever." These are the renderings (all of them grammatically untenable, and some of them nonsensical) which modern Jews and others have advanced, in order to set aside the evidence for Christ. The Chaldee Paraphrast, who laboured under no prejudice, gives the meaning of the passage thus: "The seat of Thy glory, Lord, remains for ever and ever."

become palpable realities; we lay our hand, as it were, on the glories of heaven, the eternal reunion of love, and all that is bright and beautiful in the saints' everlasting home. Methinks there is a whole mine of consolation—nay, something more than consolation—a mine of the deepest joy, in thus finding our adorable Lord represented by the holy spirit of prophecy as no less than Divine. For, brethren, there can be no doubt that the Christian's greatest happiness is derived from a firm conviction that the Saviour on whom he leans, is the very and eternal God. Let him become thoroughly convinced of this great truth, and then Christianity becomes a reality, heaven becomes a reality, our eternity of bliss becomes a reality. Death dies and the grave is swallowed up before such a conviction. Life absorbs all into itself —mighty, conquering, intense life.

When it is said that Christ's throne is for ever and ever, it is meant that His kingdom shall never come to an end. It was of the same throne that Daniel spoke when he told Nebuchadnezzar that in the last days the God of heaven would set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed, but should stand for ever. There is something particularly pleasing in this idea of everlasting durability which is ever associated in holy Scripture with all that pertains to Christ's cause. This eternity of duration is one of the most glorious characteristics of all that is Christian. The Christian dispensation will never be destroyed; that is, it will last as long as the world lasts. And when the church militant shall have fought all its battles on earth, Christ's throne shall only become more glorious,

set up, as it will be, in greater security and peace, in the hearts of the millions of His church triumphant in heaven.

When the Psalmist says in the words that follow, "The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre," we at once get the notion of a regular system of government carried on by means of rewards and punishments. Christ as a King will show judgment and justice both in making and administering His laws; right and equity will be the basis of His throne. And was not that great act of His whereby He became a King, and received a kingdom, and obtained subjects to govern, an act to satisfy justice? Many kings come to the throne by usurpation and wrong, but Christ purchased the people over whom He was to rule.

You see, then, how the kingdom of Him who is called the "Branch of Righteousness" (Jer. xxxiii. 15), and "The Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 6), is established on righteousness and justice.

And the first preaching of Christianity, as you may recollect, implied this very thing—namely, that the sceptre of Christ's kingdom would be a right sceptre. God would no longer wink at the times of ignorance, but all men were expected to repent and reform, since a kingdom of righteousness was going to be set up in the world. The professed reason, you observe, why men were called on to repent was, that that kingdom was at hand. The right sceptre, or the sceptre of justice, would soon be wielded, and therefore, if men did not correct their morals, and conform to the perfect standard of right and equity, they must no longer expect to escape. You recollect, also, how

when John the Baptist came forth on his public ministry, he announced the same great truth to his hearers when he said, "*Now* also the ax is laid unto the roots of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." (Matt. iii. 10.) Nay; Christ's very coming must necessarily be "on a prepared way, and straight paths." At His approach the "valleys must be filled," "the mountains and hills must be brought low, the crooked must be made straight, and the rough ways smooth." Everything must be prepared as befitting the coming of a King whose sceptre was to be a right sceptre.

The justice, or rightness, with which Christ will exercise His kingly dominion supposes, as I have said, a system of rewards and punishments. Justice as loudly demands that the evil-doer be punished, as that he that doeth well be rewarded. And so we find that when Christ came "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," He had also a commission to proclaim "the day of vengeance of our God." The sceptre of His kingdom could not have been a right sceptre if He had not had the will and the power to crush the enemies of justice. But Christ would "execute righteousness on the earth," not simply by "treading in His anger and trampling in His fury" the devoted sons of Bozrah, but also by "visiting the transgressions of His own sons with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes." He would be like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; He would "purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they might offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Mal. iii. 3.) Hence St. Peter says, "The time is come that

judgment must begin at the house of God." Christ would first exercise His righteous rule over His own people. If charity begins at home, so does judgment. He who does not govern his own house well will be ill qualified to rule the house of his enemy. "If judgment first begins at us," continues the Apostle, "what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?" If Christ's own must pass through the furnace in order to be purified, will Christ's enemies come out of it unconsumed? "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?"

And is it not evident to every one that wherever Christ's kingdom is set up, in either a nation or a human heart, the sceptre of that kingdom is a right sceptre? Compare the righteous, equal, and merciful laws of Christian England with the arbitrary, unjust, and tyrannical customs of those nations where the light of the Gospel has never shined; compare the Christian himself with the follower of Mahomet, the devotee of Brahmah or Vishnu, or the mere professor, on whose heart the religion of Jesus has exerted no influence, and then the comparative straightness of Christ's sceptre shall be evident. Moreover, you must keep in mind that which distinguishes the rule of Christ more, perhaps, than anything else, namely, that the Christian must not wrong his neighbour even in thought. Human laws relate in general only to the outward acts; but Christ's laws bring their standard to men's inmost intents and remotest imaginations. Wrong and unrighteousness may not lurk even in the deepest recesses of that darkest and surest of all hiding-places, the human heart, undetected by Christ's

all-seeing eye, and unpunished by His all-avenging justice. That new commandment, "Love one another, as I have loved you," gave Christ's subjects a standard of moral right and wrong, compared with which the straightest standards of human invention were bent, crooked, and deformed. What are all the boasted integrity, patriotism, and justice of Roman virtue, compared with the love that lives and breathes in the heart of the Christian? Ambition and a desire of human applause may make a man just, or brave, or patriotic; but can they convey into his heart one spark of Christian love? Most assuredly not. That is too pure, too heavenly a thing, to be connected with motives like these. It has no alliance or kindredship with the base-born things of earth. It stands alone in the grandeur of its native majesty, unapproached and unapproachable.

Thus, wherever Christ's kingdom is set up in the heart of man, we shall find not only an uncompromising obedience to justice and rectitude in all that man's dealings with his fellow-men, but a love of justice for its own sake, and a love of his brethren for theirs. I do not say that there will be no over-reaching, no advantage-taking, no worldly acts of base imposition, under Christ's sceptre (for these are practices unworthy of anything bearing the semblance of a man, and not to be mentioned, or even thought of, in connexion with the Christian), but there will be no *thinking* of evil. Let us examine ourselves by this test, brethren. Do we think no evil? So far from our deriving secret satisfaction from others' ills, do we rejoice in their prosperity, though our own state be adverse? Is the voice of slander never pleasing to our ears? Is there no envying amongst us? Have we as

much indulgence for our neighbours' faults as for our own? Recollect, these are the surest tests to examine ourselves by, to know whether we are Christ's true and loyal subjects or not. If we are not in love and charity with our brethren, we are law-breakers, and the officers of justice are out on our track. Be not deceived, fond Christian; thou mayest *not* be like other men. Thou owest not thy allegiance to the same king, thou art not bound by the same laws, as the rest of the world. It is a crooked sceptre that is wielded over the subjects of sin and Satan; and therefore no wonder their ways, their actions, their thoughts, and aspirations, are all crooked. But the sceptre of *thy* King's sovereignty is a right sceptre, and therefore straight and right must be all that thou art. If thou bendest thy mind to sin and vanity, thou must expect to bear the racking and straining consequent on its straightening again; for it shall be straightened, though every bone be broken in the operation. Though thou wert bowed together like her who had the spirit of infirmity, thou must be made upright. No groans, no shrieks, no cries for mercy, shall serve thy purpose. The straightening process shall go on, notwithstanding all thy appeals. The bursting of the tendons—the cracking of the bones—the deep-drawn breath—the earnest, beseeching eye—all will not do; thy bent soul must be straightened, though death itself should follow the operation. It is mercy that is racking thee, although thou thinkest that mercy has fled for ever.

Ay, brethren, when dark days come, and the Christian looks up in amazement at the storm that is gathering over him; when men are cruel and God seems to have for-

gotten; when insult and contumely are heaped upon his head as if he were "the offscouring of all things;" when those whose love and memory were the sunshine of his life are snatched away as if God envied him the happiness they afforded, and he is left as it were alone in a cold selfish world; then he is experiencing the truth of the Psalmist's words—"The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." All this is only the screw, the pulley, and the vice of the Mighty Operator bringing back to its original rectitude the bent, crooked soul. If the Christian had kept close to his Lord, God would not have seemed to forget him, nor would he have cared for men's cruelty, contumely, and wrong. If he had not fixed his heart too much on an earthly object his jealous God would not so soon have snatched it away; nor would its loss have pained him so deeply when He did. He has been punished because he has transgressed. He would have escaped under a government less just; but the laws of *his* King allow of no escape to unrighteousness, because the sceptre of that King is a right sceptre.

Again: when the Christian yields to the seductions of the world, and joins in its frivolities, gaities, and pursuits; when he yields to the cravings of the flesh, and forgets that his body is a temple of the Holy Ghost; when he yields to the wiles of Satan and lets other things step in between the soul and its God; then he will experience how straight a sceptre it is which is wielded above him. His Lord has ordained that all these things shall put to flight a realizing sense of His own presence and favour. The light of His love is snatched away by the hand of His justice, and the guilty Christian is left in the dark,

groping his blind-folded way as if there were no God, no Christ, no Spirit, no life, no light, in the universe. You will often hear Christians complaining of the coldness of their hearts, and the far-awayness of God, so to speak. And, good unsuspecting people, it never strikes them that they themselves are in any way to blame for the lifelessness which they lament. But if you would just ask them what they have been doing; what concessions they have been making; you would find that their own neglect is almost invariably at the bottom of it. Christ and His Spirit will not be neglected. Nor will they keep company with the vanities of the world, or the indulgences of the flesh. If the Christian does not *cultivate* spiritual-mindedness he need not expect to be spiritually-minded. His coldness of heart is the punishment inflicted by the righteous laws of his Sovereign; and whenever he bemoans his state, he is only bearing his testimony to all who hear him that the sceptre of his Lord's kingdom is a right sceptre.

The Prophet having thus described Christ's throne and sceptre; His throne an everlasting one, and His sceptre a sceptre of righteousness, now passes on to the *cause* of His advancement to such kingly dignity. "Thou hast loved righteousness," he says, "and hated iniquity; *therefore*,* God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." You observe how usual it is to impute Christ's exaltation to His merits. God blessed Him for ever, as in the second verse of this Psalm (if such be the sense of that verse), *because* He was fairer than the children of men, and grace was poured into His

* "*Because* God hath anointed thee."—*Calvin.*

lips. And so the Apostle, God highly exalted Him, and gave Him a name above every name, *because* He had humbled Himself and become obedient to death. And here God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows, *because* He loved righteousness and hated iniquity.

In my last discourse we saw how Christ rode forth an armour-clad warrior as the champion of truth, meekness, and righteousness. He showed that He loved righteousness by thus enlisting all His power and might in its cause. He showed that He hated iniquity when He took up arms against it, and proclaimed Himself its irreconcilable enemy. Christ proved His love and His hate by His acts. His was no mere sentimental love that wishes well, but goes no further than wishes. It was a living, acting, all-absorbing principle that would spend and be spent for the interest of its object. His was no fictitious hate either, evoked as it were to save appearances; it was a natural antipathy that no time nor circumstance could remove or modify. Many a one loves righteousness but would not be its champion—such a love is not Christ's love. Many a one hates iniquity not for its own sake but for the sake of its consequences—such a hate is not Christ's hate. To be like Christ we must love righteousness as He loved, and hate wickedness as He hated. To love and hate as He loves and hates is to be perfect as He is perfect. The perfection of this love and hate is moral perfection. Hence you see the connexion between Christ's character and exaltation. He was perfection embodied in humanity; and, therefore, to Him belonged as of right the highest pitch of dignity and power. Now if you

keep in mind that Christ as our Head is only a magnified image of the least of His brethren, you will have no difficulty in discovering that our exaltation will depend on our love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. Just in proportion as these principles are developed in us, in the same proportion shall we ascend in the scale of Christian greatness—in happiness here, in glory hereafter. He in whom this love and hate are ripened the most fully is the happiest saint on earth, and shall be the brightest saint in heaven. This is the Divine character, and the more it is ours, the more do we become partakers of the Divine nature. To have this character is to be like Christ; and we know that in that likeness consist the Christian's highest happiness and glory.

We have seen that Christ's love of righteousness led Him forth to war in its behalf; and so the love that is like Christ's love must ever make its owner a champion in the same cause. He who has not a missionary spirit, missionary hands, and missionary prayers, does not love righteousness as Christ loved. It is the love of righteousness that makes the missionary; and he is no true missionary, though a martyr in the cause, whom a love of righteousness has not made one.

It is in allusion to the custom of anointing kings on their accession to the throne that the Psalmist here says, "Therefore God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." He had just mentioned Christ's throne and sceptre, and now he notices the enthronement and investiture. It is the same event that is foretold in the Second Psalm, where God is represented as saying, "I have anointed my king upon my holy hill

of Zion." Christ is here said to be anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, because His would be a happier and more joyful reign, and a more universal sovereignty than any other king ever enjoyed.

The anointing oil is called the oil of gladness in allusion to the festivities and rejoicings that generally accompany the accession to the throne of a new prince; but Christ's enthronement would be attended with rejoicings far more real and far more universal than ever gladdened the heart of a mere earthly monarch. And so lavish would God be of this anointing-oil of gladness, so entirely would it overflow all Christ's garments, that they should seem composed, as it were, of the choicest spices—myrrh, aloes, and cassia. This anointing evidently refers to the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which, we are told, was given to Christ without measure.

Commentators have been more perplexed in explaining the following words, namely, "out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad," than any other part of the Psalm. Not to detain you with the various expositions that have been proposed, I will give you what I conceive to be the meaning of the passage. The word rendered "whereby," is also the name of a region in Arabia Felix, viz., Minnæa, which, according to the geographer Strabo, "abounded in myrrh and frankincense." Now, it is singular that, according to the historian Diodorus Siculus, "the inhabitants of Arabia Felix had sumptuous houses, adorned with *ivory* and precious stones." *

* See Rosenmüller on the "Messianic Psalms," p. 214. "Biblical Cabinet," vol. xxxii.

Putting these two things together, therefore, namely, that this region abounded in myrrh and frankincense, and that its inhabitants adorned their houses with ivory, we may, I conceive, find a clue to the Psalmist's meaning. If we substitute "Minnæa" for "whereby," the passage will run thus,—

> "Myrrh, aloes, and cassia, are all thy garments;
> From ivory palaces of Minnæa they have made thee glad."

You recollect in the verse just going before, the oil with which Christ was said to be anointed is called the oil of *gladness*. Accordingly, He is here said to be made *glad* (it is the same word in both places in the Hebrew) by the spices of which that oil is composed. Those spices are said to have been brought out of the most spicy region of the land of spices, and it is implied that they are the best spices of that spicy region. "Out of ivory palaces," says the Psalmist; not only houses, but palaces—the mansions of the great, where the best spices would naturally be kept—out of these have come the myrrh, aloes, and cassia that have composed the oil of gladness whereby thou art made glad.

God anointed Christ, when He set Him on His everlasting throne, with the oil of gladness; and this anointing was so profuse, His garments were so overspread with it, that they seemed to be nothing but myrrh, aloes, and cassia. The spices, moreover, of which the anointing oil was composed, were the best of their kind, brought, as they were, from the ivory palaces of Minnæa. Such appears to be the Psalmist's meaning; and when thus

understood, the passage becomes most beautifully expressive of the *excellency* and *unmeasured supply* of the gifts and graces of that Spirit with which Christ was anointed by His Father.

DISCOURSE XVI.

PSALM XLV. 9, 10, 11.

"Kings' daughters are among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him."

WE have already found our Lord Jesus Christ described in this Psalm, first as the Perfect Man and the Great Teacher, then as a Warrior, and next as a King on His throne. Hitherto our eyes have been kept fixed on the King himself, but in the verses that I have just read, our attention is directed to other objects.

From Messiah anointed so profusely with the oil of gladness, we are brought to contemplate the brilliant retinue with which He is surrounded in His regal palace. Jesus Christ sits not solitary on the throne to which God has raised Him; His dignity, greatness, happiness, and all that He has and is, are shared with His people.

"Kings' daughters," says the Psalmist, "are among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." This, I need hardly say, is a figure taken from the courts of Eastern monarchs,

and from that of Solomon especially, amongst whose bright beauties even the daughters of kings were proud to have a place. The figure is evident; but the thing signified by the figure—who those honourable women are intended to represent—who we are to understand by the queen—these are not so evident. Commentators are much divided on the subject. I will not, however, detain you with the various opinions which they have advanced, but bring before you what I conceive to be the correct interpretation.

It is noticeable that the honourable, or shining, or resplendent ones (for so the word signifies), among whom the Psalmist tells us kings' daughters are to be found, are mentioned *before* the consort. One would have expected the queen to be the object to arrest a poet's attention next after the king himself. But you will have perceived that from the beginning of the Psalm the writer follows the order of events with regard to the time of their occurrence, and not with regard to their importance. The whole history of Messiah as a King is brought before the Psalmist as in a great panorama, and his ready tongue describes each particular as it comes under his view. When, therefore, we hear these honourable women mentioned before the queen, we should naturally expect that they had been resident in the king's palace before her. And this expectation perfectly agrees with what might be otherwise learned from the verses themselves. That the queen is a new comer, is evident, or, at least, almost evident, from the exhortation which the Psalmist takes the liberty of addressing to her, namely, "Forget thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly

desire thy beauty." It is, I think, observable that no such advice is tendered to any of the honourable women, although they must be considered to have left their own people and their fathers' houses, as well as the queen. It becomes all plain if we suppose that the former had been already resident in the king's palace so long as to *have* forgotten their kindred and former associates, but that the latter had just come to her new dignity at the king's right hand, and would be more likely to long after the home and kindred which she had so lately left. It appears, therefore, necessary to offer an explanation that will meet these conditions, namely, that the honourable women have been already acclimatized, as it were, in the king's court, and that the queen is a new comer.

In Scripture language, as you are no doubt aware, a state or city is often spoken of as the daughter of that state or city. Thus, we read of the daughter of Judah, the daughter of Zion, the daughter of Babylon, where it is the state, or kingdom, or city of Judah, or Zion, or Babylon that is meant. Therefore, when the Psalmist speaks of kings' daughters as being amongst the honourable women of King Messiah's court, we are to understand him as alluding to those kingdoms which have been brought to Christ, and are acknowledging His sovereignty. The king's palace is Christ's Church; and the presence of those honourable women shows that many kingdoms as well as inferior states belong to that Church, at the period to which the Prophet's vision refers. I say, as well as inferior states; for you observe, it is said, that "kings' daughters are *among* thy honourable women," evidently

supposing that all the honourables are not kings' daughters.

Now, brethren, thus far the vision is easily understood. We know that many kingdoms and states have been brought into the Church of Christ already; and as Christians we believe and are convinced that they will continue to be brought in, until every power under heaven shall have acknowledged the dominion, and submitted to the laws, of King Jesus. We believe that the time is coming when all the kings' daughters, and daughters of inferior rank in every corner of our globe shall be numbered among the honourables of King Messiah's court.

We can, therefore, bear our testimony to the fulfilment, at least the partial fulfilment, of the Prophet's vision thus far. But passing on from those kings' daughters, who or what does the queen represent, who stands at Christ's right hand in gold of Ophir? By the queen, I conceive, we are to understand the Jewish nation restored to their own land, and converted to the faith of Christ.* The word translated "queen" conveys the idea of consort or wife; and you are all aware how constantly God speaks of the duty of the Jewish people to Himself, as that of a wife to her husband. In Ezekiel He tells the tale of their first nuptials, and reproaches his spouse with unfaithfulness to her marriage obligations. "Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem, When I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine. But thou didst trust in thine

* This is Bishop Horsley's view.

own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown." (Ezek. xvi. 3, 8, 15.) The marriage contract being thus violated, God cast off His faithless spouse; but while He did so, He spoke of a time in which He should remember the covenant that He had made with her in the days of her youth, and establish with her an *everlasting* covenant. "I will betroth thee unto me *for ever*," He says, "yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and in lovingkindness and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord." (Hosea ii. 19, 20.)

Now, when the Psalmist sees the queen standing at Christ's right hand in gold of Ophir, we may well suppose that he simply sees the fulfilment of God's promises to His own people. He sees the Jewish nation after all her backslidings and wanderings—after all her sufferings for her unfaithfulness, restored to her Lord's favour once more, and rejoicing in her own place at His right hand. "She shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And in that day she shall call him Ishi (or my husband), and shall no more call him Baali (or my Lord.)" (Hosea ii. 15, 16.)

We know that the Jews shall yet be brought into the fold of Christ. Blindness is happened to Israel only in part. When the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, then *all* Israel shall be saved. And we may, I conceive, regard that event as not very far distant. Many kings' daughters are even now among the honourables of King Messiah's palace; and we stand expecting, as it were, the coming of the consort herself. Her coming is

at least the event next in order in the prophetic vision. And, as far as we can judge, that is an event for which God seems to be making preparation.

This pre-eminence of the Jewish nation over the other nations of the world, in whatever that pre-eminence may consist, is very explicitly foretold by the prophet Micah (iv. 8), where he says, "And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the *first dominion: the kingdom* shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem."

At this point, the Psalmist turns away from the king to whom he has been speaking thus far, and addresses himself to the consort. He passes by in silence the kings' daughters, and others who are assembled in the royal palace, as if they required no word of counsel, and calls on the queen to pay attention to his exhortation. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people and thy father's house." Observe how he reiterates the call—"Hearken," "consider," "incline thine ear." You would suppose not only that he had to give some very weighty and important advice, when he thus trebles his appeal for the consort's attention; but also that, for some cause or other, he considered that in her case such an advice was very much required. We should expect to find not only the duty an incumbent one, but a more than ordinary tendency to fail in that duty, when we hear such anxious exhortations respecting its fulfilment. And if you consider the history of the Jewish people, you will at once perceive how much they need the exhortation given here by the Psalmist. Their besetting temptation was, and still is, to think too highly of

themselves, and of their father's house. "We are Abraham's seed," they exclaim, and regard with contempt the uncircumcised Gentiles by whom they are surrounded.* And, indeed, the Jews *had* great advantages over the Gentiles, for unto them were committed the oracles of God; but those advantages were converted into disadvantages by the pride and folly which they engendered. God's blessings belonged to them, and to them exclusively, they thought, because they were the favoured nation. They relied on their name, and not on their deservings; they were blessed because they were Jews, and not because they were righteous. No wonder, therefore, the Psalmist calls on the consort so earnestly to forget her own people, and her father's house. Her great danger lay here—this

* The following information is to be communicated to a Gentile who wishes to turn Jew, as given by Dr. M'Caul, in "The Old Paths," page 90:—

"As they are to make known to him the punishments attached to the commandments, so they are also to inform him of the rewards for keeping them. They should inform him that, by the doing of these commandments, he will be worthy of everlasting life; and that there is no perfectly righteous man, except that possessor of wisdom who does and knows them. And they are to say to him, 'Be assured that *the world to come is laid up for none but the righteous, and they are Israel;* and as to this, that thou seest Israel in trouble in this world, their good things are laid up for them, *for they cannot receive an abundance of good things in this world, like the nations.* Their heart might, perchance, be lifted up, and they might go astray, and lose the reward of the world to come, as it is said, "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." The Holy One, blessed be he, brings upon them the abundance of afflictions for no other reason than this, that they may not be lost. *All the nations shall be utterly destroyed,* but they shall abide.'—Hilchoth Issure Biah., c. xiv. 3—5."

was her strongest passion—it was the right eye and the right foot, which she must pluck out and cut off. Therefore, he says, "hearken," "consider," "incline thine ear." This is a thing of the very greatest importance. Thy happiness and the favour of thy Lord depend upon it.

You recollect how a similar demand was made of Abraham, the first father of the race, when he was called out of the land of Chaldea—the land of his fathers: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." (Gen. xii. 1.) In passing from the state of idolatry into that of the *first* covenant, Abraham was commanded to leave all behind him; and so, in passing from the first covenant state to that of the *second*, Abraham's seed are commanded to forget their former privileges, and prerogatives, and all that they once were. Indeed, the whole scheme of our progress as spiritual beings consists in a forgetting of those things that are behind, and a pressing forward to those that are before. When we first come to Christ, we must forsake, if need be, house and friends and possessions, or we are not worthy to be His disciples. The whole Divine economy is one of progress. We cannot stand still. If the things of the world do not accompany us in our onward march, we cannot wait for them, much less linger by their side. And after we *have* come to Christ, our daily life must be a forgetting of the past and a going on to perfection. There is ever a glorious future before the Christian—a shining goal in the distance, to which he is to press. We never arrive at that stage at which we can say, "We have reached the mark; our work

is done: we can rest here." Nay; eternity itself, we need not doubt, will be an eternity of progress. We have no reason to suppose that the Divine economy will change its character as soon as we have passed through the narrow gate of the grave. There, as here, we shall go on advancing in the development of the Divine nature. If it is life eternal to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, our eternal life will become intensified every hour; for as thinking, intelligent beings we must every hour increase in knowledge of Him whom it will require eternity to know. Now this increasing in knowledge of a Being who is all love and goodness, will necessarily deepen our love in proportion to its own development. But to love wisely is to be happy; and the more such love is deepened the more our happiness is increased. Consequently our eternity must be a state of progress in happiness as well as in love and knowledge. We shall go on *for ever* forgetting those things that are behind, and pressing forward to those that are before. It is infinity of perfection that is before us: it is infinite goodness that we have to contemplate: it is infinite love that we have to love in return: it is infinite greatness, whose works spread out on every side for our wonder and praise. If God's goodness, or love, or greatness were less than infinite, we might reach the extreme boundary at last, and, consequently, cease to be happy. It is the very infinity of all that is before us that assures us of eternal felicity. O glorious, blessed hope! No limit looming in the far future! No barrier where God says, "Hitherto shall ye come, and no further"! It is a boundless landscape that widens out before the redeemed

rejoicing soul! It is an endless flight that its untiring pinions will take o'er the works of its Father and God!

Surely, dear friends, such a prospect as this ought to fill us with the most ardent, intense love to Him who has placed it before us. Surely our lives, and all that we are, ought to be devoted to His service. It ought to be our daily and hourly prayer that we may be enabled to love Him more, and serve Him better. Our deepest love and truest service are but a poor return. Nor does God require them because He needs them, but for our own sakes. He knows that by loving and serving Him our natures become ennobled, and our happiness increased.

Let me now call your attention to the words that follow: "So shall the king greatly desire, or set his heart upon, thy beauty." You observe the Psalmist here mentions this desire on the part of the King as a consequence of the consort's forgetting her own people and her father's house. But surely it is not necessary that the wife should forget the house of her father, and all her former associations, in order to secure the love of her husband; or, rather, in order to induce him to set his heart upon her personal charms. It would be unreasonable and cruel to demand of a woman, on her becoming a wife, to forget all that she had ever been in the days of her youth; and it would be the height of folly to make such a demand on the plea that on no other condition could her charms be appreciated by her husband. Those interpreters, therefore, who would have this Psalm to be nothing more than a marriage song composed on the occasion of the nuptials of Solomon and his Egyptian bride, will find no small difficulty, if I mistake not, in accounting for the anxiety

evinced on this subject by the Psalmist. But I confess I almost feel that I ought to apologize for stopping to notice an interpretation so inadequate to meet all the requirements of the Psalm, and so full of the most glaring absurdities. When we regard Christ as the King, and the Jewish nation brought to the knowledge of Christ as the Consort, then the force and fitness of the language become at once apparent. The Psalmist is only speaking New Testament language when he informs the Queen that she must forget and forsake all that she ever was; and that if she do so forget and forsake, Christ shall set His everlasting love upon her as His beautiful spouse. "He that loveth father or mother more than me," says Christ Himself, "is not worthy of me." But "he who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

Here our Divine Lord declares, without a figure, what His Spirit had declared, under a figure, by means of the Psalmist's pen, a thousand years before. The King shall set his heart upon the Consort's beauty, if she will forget her own people and her father's house; and Christ shall reward with His own gracious favour (for that is the "hundredfold" spoken of as being received in the present time) those who have left friends or possessions for His sake. Leaving all for Christ is that which will exalt the Jewish Church to a place in her Lord's affections; and leaving all for Christ is that which distinguishes and exalts the Christian in every age. When you have studied the history of one single believer, brethren, be he the

poorest and obscurest of mankind, you have studied the history of Christ's Universal Church in all ages, past, present, and to come. It is a short history, and easily told. The Psalmist tells it all in two lines,—"Forget thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king set his heart upon thy beauty." Count all things but dung that you may win Christ, and be found in Him, and you have travelled the road that all Christ's hosts have travelled, or shall yet travel, till the end of time. To the Jewish Church, to the Gentile Church, to the Christian on a throne, and to the Christian in a cottage, the exhortation is equally applicable, "Forget thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king set his heart upon thy beauty."

The concluding words of this verse also claim our attention, namely, "For he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." "He, and not thine own people and thy father's house, has now a right to thy affections, thy reverence, and obedience. To him, as thy Lord, thou owest them all." The words are peculiarly applicable to the Jewish nation just converted to Christianity. What is the whole conduct of that people at the present day, and what has it been for the last eighteen hundred years but a denying of this truth, "He is thy Lord"? Ever since the day in which they cried, "We have no king but Cæsar," their whole life has been a disavowal of this relationship to them of Jesus of Nazareth. "We will *not* have this man to reign over us. He is *not* our Lord," has been the one watchword of their race. There is a peculiar fitness, therefore, in thus pressing upon them a truth which they have so long and so obstinately denied.

Christ, you observe, is here spoken of as the Adonai, or Lord of the queen who sits at His right hand; and, as such, the Psalmist demands for Him her worship and adoration. Christ is master and Lord, as well as husband and elder brother. As master and Lord we owe Him our worship and service; as husband and brother our love. The queen is called on to worship Him, not because He is her husband, but because He is her lord and king. The Christian ought never to forget any of the relations in which he stands to his great Head, Christ. If he always think of Him as a brother he will become too familiar; if he always think of Him as a Lord he will become too slavish. Let us keep *all* the relations in which He stands to us stored up in our memory; and let us ever take care that we trespass on none of them, but derive comfort from all.

Brethren, is not the subject which we have been considering well calculated to inspire our hearts with the greatest confidence in the hopes and promises set before us by our Divine Redeemer? When we see Him as a heaven-anointed King, whose throne is for ever and ever, surrounded by the kingdoms of the world as so many handmaids—worshipped as her Lord by that very nation that once rejected Him as a malefactor, and put Him to an ignominious death, shall we fear that one good thing that He ever spoke will fall to the ground? Listen to this God-King declaring to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also," and then try if heaven and the bright home of the hereafter do not seem a certain and

almost palpable reality. This prophetic portraying of the Divine Jesus which we see fulfilled and fulfilling in our day, gives us the idea of such greatness and stability that we lay hold on Him as the very Rock of Ages, and rejoice in having found Him with a joy which the tongue may attempt to utter in vain. The soul rests here—except, indeed, that it scarcely believes, for very joy, that it has found so great a treasure. It tries it over and over again, to assure itself whether it be the pearl of great price that it has found or not, and at every fresh trial seems to itself to have made a new discovery, because the fine gold has not become dim, the pearl has not turned out a counterfeit. "There *is* a heaven and a bright home before me," it murmurs again and again, as conviction after conviction breaks in upon it. "There *is* a recovering of the lost beyond the confines of the tomb. There *is* an eternity of purity, and innocence, and love awaiting me, for this glorious adorable Being has promised it; and He is too good and too great to deceive!"

Let us ever, my Christian brethren, endeavour to connect all that we learn of Christ with the hopes and promises that He has set before His people. To study Him in either prophecy or history with any other object in view is to spend our labour in vain. And what comfort may we not derive from everything that we learn of Him? Comfort for the present, and comfort for the future. The believer has no cause for fear, even for things of this life—they shall be all added to the kingdom of God and His righteousness which he has already sought and found. The believer has no cause for fear for the life to come—his great High Priest is passed into the

heavens to appear in his behalf; his reconciliation is therefore made, and a place is being prepared for his reception. Cared and watched over day by day in this his mortal life, he shall be taken hence when that place is ready, and not till then.

O, then, you who have realized and laid hold on the promises that Christ has given, cease not to offer Him the thanks, praise, and service of your undying gratitude. Let devotion in His cause mark every phase of your existence. Your devotion will be a poor return for the benefits you have received, but if it is offered humbly and sincerely God will accept it.

DISCOURSE XVII.

PSALM XLV. 12—17.

"And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour. The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever."

IN the concluding part of my last discourse, we found that a promise was made to the Jewish Church that if she gave up all for Christ, Christ would set His heart upon her, or, in other words, greatly desire her beauty. In the first of the verses that I have read to you to-day, there is a further promise, resting on the same condition. If thou forget thine own people, and thy father's house (continues the Psalmist), the daughter of Tyre, with a gift, even the rich among the people, shall entreat thy favour. This promise, I say, rests on the condition that the Jewish

Church shall be faithful, and attached to her Lord.* Now, recollect, that what is true of one Church is also true of another; nay, that what is true of the whole Church universal is true of the obscurest member of that Church: and you will have here a very important truth laid before you,—namely, the more faithful and devoted we are to Christ, the more will the world seek our friendship and esteem. If the Church had continued what it was in the days of the apostles, the whole world would have been converted to Christianity long ago. It is to the coldness, and lifelessness, and want of Christ in the Church, that we must look for a reason why there are so many lands still worshipping idols, and so much enmity and ill-will towards the cause of Christ still existing in the world. If the Church had continued to give up all for Christ, there would have been such a pressure on Satan's strongholds, that they must have groaned and fallen beneath it long ere this time.† And

* Hengstenberg well remarks:—"That Tyre should seek to gain the favour of the Queen, with fervent supplication and presents, in order to make her inclined to fulfil her desire, is inexplicable, on the literal interpretation. The proud island-city never stood in a relation of dependance to Israel; she always held it to be beneath her dignity to make a humble suit for his favour. Israel's King and Queen had nothing which she could have sought from them with imploring earnestness."—Comment *in loc.*

† Hengstenberg's observations here are very good:—"Only when the Church of God really occupies the *position* of the Church of God, can prayer be directed to her for reception into her society. The Church exercises a drawing power toward those that are without, in exact proportion to her own internal connexion with the Lord."

so the Spirit, knowing this great truth, says here, by the pen of the Psalmist, "Forget, O daughter, thy people, and thy father's house; and Tyre, with a gift, even the rich among the people, shall entreat thy favour."

The city of Tyre was famous for its wealth and merchandise. Thus Isaiah, speaking of its miserable overthrow, asks, "Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?"

When, therefore, the Psalmist says that "Tyre shall seek thy favour with a gift," he means that the rich and great of all nations shall try to secure the friendship and goodwill of the Jewish nation, after it has been converted to Christ. Such, at least, is the obvious meaning of the Psalmist. But as the obvious meaning is not always the true meaning, it is sometimes necessary to put it to the test of what we learn from other parts of God's revealed will. If the apparent meaning of any particular text be contrary to, or inconsistent with, the general teaching of Scripture, we may take it for granted that it is not the true meaning. God's Word cannot contradict itself. Let us, therefore, inquire what we learn relating to this subject, from other parts of the Word of God.

The following is from the prophet Isaiah (xlv. 14), "Thus saith the Lord, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee; they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee, and there is none else; there is no God." This prophecy, though

having a primary reference to the prosperity of the Jews after their return from the Babylonish Captivity, awaits, according to the best commentators, its full accomplishment, when that last great Restoration shall have taken place of which we are speaking. Here, then, you observe, we have the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Sabeans, "falling down unto Israel, and making supplications unto her," as we have the daughter of Tyre and the rich among the people seeking her favour in the Psalm. The same thing, we need not doubt, is meant in both the Prophet and Psalmist; and Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sabea, in the one, like Tyre in the other, are put for great and wealthy nations in general.

But in the prophet Zechariah, there is a prophecy still more remarkable, and more unquestionably to the point in hand. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." (Zech. viii. 20—23.) This Prophet, you observe, uses no figure of speech. He does not say, Tyre, or Egypt, or Ethiopia shall come, but, plainly, "Many and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord in Jerusalem." And observe,

again, how that, although the language employed is slightly different, the thing foretold is substantially the same in all. The Psalmist says, "They shall intreat thy favour with a gift;" Isaiah says, "They shall fall down unto thee, and make supplications unto thee;" and Zechariah says, "They shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with thee." And mark the reason, as given by these prophets, of the nations' anxiety to cast in their lot among the Jews: "Surely God is in thee, and there is none else; there is no God," they exclaim in Isaiah. "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you," is their language in Zechariah. It will be the intense spiritual life of the restored Jewish Church that will be the attractive force to the heathen world. It will be the burning light of a city as it were on a hill that will be the beacon and the guiding star to the nations still sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Is there not something particularly satisfactory in finding this remarkable agreement amongst the writers of prophecy? Human nature asks for miracles, in order that it may believe God's testimonies to be His testimonies. "What sign showest thou?" is the universal inquiry. And God has left man without excuse. The agreement of the prophecies *is* a miracle; it *is* a sign that they are from God. Who but the Omniscient Spirit could have guided those three men, strangers to each other,—nay, living in different ages of the world's history,—to write of the same event, so far future, and to connect with it the same circumstances? Why, brethren, the whole Bible, studied in its own light, and in that of history, is only one series of miracles and signs. The hand of its

Author is stamped on it as plainly and unmistakeably as it is on the earth which we tread, or the sky which surrounds us. The Spirit of God and He alone could have written the Bible. All the learned and wise of all ages could no more have done it than they could have set the sun in the sky, in all his grandeur and beauty. And oh, what hopes and prospects spring up before us, when we have grasped with our whole heart and soul this one majestic truth,—"The Bible is God's own Book"! Open the Bible, and eternity lies before you. There you have it photographed; its very light and colours come out, under the subtle skill of the Divine Artist. We have many blessings, brethren; but the blessing of an open Bible is the greatest of all. Let us, then, make much of the treasure which God has sent us. Let us study it well. And let us entreat the aid of the same Spirit, by whose inspiration it was written, that it may be, in the darkness and sorrow of life, our light and our comfort.

The next thing that we learn from these verses is the fact that the heathen nations of the world, spoken of here, under the name of Tyre and her companions, shall be brought to Christ, through the mediumship and instrumentality of the christianized Jewish people. The Psalmist, having just informed us that Tyre shall entreat the Church's favour with a gift, immediately declares that she *herself** shall be brought to the King, that is, to

* I offer this exposition with great deference and submission, since Bishops Patrick, Hall, Horne, and Horsley, Dr. Hammond and Thomas Scott, together with Calvin, Cocceius, Grotius, Dathe, Rosenmüller, and Hengstenberg, regard the "King's daughter," mentioned in the 13th verse, and the Queen, as one and the same person.

Christ. It is always a good sign, brethren, to see people attracted by a sort of irresistible longing towards God's house and people. To have a desire to mingle with Christians, is the very next step to becoming a Christian. And, on the other hand, there is no surer sign that we have neither part nor lot in the things of Christ, than a dislike to Christian society and companionship. He who has no taste for Christian communion, and can absent himself from the public worship of the Christian sanctuary without a sufficient cause, has a proof in himself that Christ and he are strangers. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," says St. John. To love Christians, as Christians, is the

It would have been much pleasanter to be able to agree with, than to be obliged to differ from, such men. The difficulties that appeared to lie in the way of adopting their opinion, were these:—

1. The Queen is represented, in the 9th verse, as *already* standing at the right hand of the King; and there is no apparent reason, nor is any probable one assigned, why she should be again said to be brought to Him, in the 14th verse.

2. The Queen is said to stand at the King's right hand, in "gold of Ophir;" and the King's daughter is said to be brought to the King, in "wrought gold" and "raiment of needlework."

3. When, in the 14th verse, it is said, "The virgins shall be brought to *thee*," the "thee" cannot be well addressed to the King, for He has been already spoken of, in the same verse, in the *third* person. It is, moreover, *feminine* in the Hebrew, so that the Masorites must have understood it of the Queen.

Now, when it is said, that the virgin companions that follow the King's daughter shall be brought to the Queen, it is difficult to see how the King's daughter can be the Queen.

In the exposition that I have offered, all these difficulties are avoided.

surest sign that our own Christianity is genuine. But we naturally wish to be in the society of those whom we love. Consequently, if we willingly absent ourselves from God's house and people, we show that we do *not* love the brethren, that we have not passed from death unto life, and that we are still in our sins.

In my last discourse, we found that the kings' daughters, who were said to be amongst the honourable women of King Messiah's palace, were the Gentile kingdoms that had been converted to the faith of Christ before the conversion of the Jews. But the Psalmist is here speaking of those Gentile nations which shall be brought to Christ after that conversion, and by means of it. And so, having mentioned Tyre, he speaks of her also as a king's daughter; classing her, you perceive, with those Gentile kingdoms which had already become Christian. It is, of course, impossible to decide whether any particular nation is alluded to by this name, and, if so, what that nation is; but the general meaning of the prophecy is evident—namely, that, as I have already said, by Tyre and her companions are meant all those nations which shall not be converted to the Christian religion till after the restoration of the Jews to their own land.

The 13th, 14th, and 15th verses may, and I believe ought to be, rendered thus:—

"She is all glorious, a King's daughter: her inward* clothing is of wrought gold.

* "The King's daughter is all glorious within." (English Version.) The words are generally interpreted of the spiritual graces of the Church. But this King's daughter (no matter how we regard her) has not yet been brought to Christ; and,

"She shall be conducted * to the King in raiment of needlework.

"The virgins, her companions that follow her, coming unto thee, shall be conducted with joy and gladness—shall enter the King's palace."

The wrought gold with which the daughter of Tyre is said to be clothed, shows that that nation, whatever nation is alluded to, will be distinguished for its wealth and magnificence; whilst the raiment of needlework in which she is said to be conducted to the King, points, in all probability, to its skill in arts and sciences. She is said to be "all glorious" in reference to the richness and superbness of her clothing. Not only is her inner garment of wrought gold, but her outer garment is of the choicest embroidery. In other words, the nation alluded to, will be not only wealthy, like Tyre of old, but, like her, also will have at her command all the luxuries and elegancies that wealth and commerce can procure.

We have seen that this daughter of Tyre came seeking the favour of the Jewish Church, and as a consequence of her anxiety for the friendship of God's people, was

until this shall have taken place, what spiritual graces can she be said to have?

The English Version is, perhaps, as good as any that can be offered, if we understand the word "within" to relate to the "clothing of gold." That we should do so is, I think, obvious from the very construction of the verse, independently of other considerations. We have here, both *clothing* of gold and *raiment* of needlework; it is necessary, therefore, that one of these be the inward part of the dress, but, unless the word in question relate to one of them, we shall not know which is inward or which outward.

* "She is conducted in procession to the King."—*Horsley.*

brought to Christ Himself. And this is exactly what we are told here of the virgins that follow her, or the inferior states* which imitate her example. "Coming unto thee," says the Psalmist, that is, to the queen or the Jewish people restored, "they shall be conducted with joy and gladness—they shall enter the king's palace;" or in other words, they shall enter the fold of the Christian Church. Both Tyre and her companions therefore—that is, all the remaining heathen world—will be brought to Christ through the mediumship and instrumentality of the Jews.

There is a remarkable agreement here between the Psalmist and St. Paul. The latter says in his Epistle to the Romans (xi. 12, 15), "Now if the fall of them (the Jews) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" And the prophet Zechariah also speaks in a similar strain of this remarkable people when they shall be "brought from the east country, and the west country, and shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and be God's people, and God their God in truth and righteousness." "As ye were a curse among the heathen, O house

* Bishop Horsley understands these virgins to represent new Churches, as the honourable women mentioned in the 9th verse represented Churches formed and established in the period of the wife's disgrace. Churches, however, are never spoken of as kings' daughters, or as the daughters of those places where they exist; nor are they Churches at all until they *have been brought* to Christ. These virgins, therefore, represent kingdoms and states rather than Churches.

of Judah and house of Israel," he says, "so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing." (Zech. viii. 8, 13.)

It is our duty and our privilege, brethren, to strive and pray for the hastening of this glorious event. With it are connected the brightest and happiest features of the Church's history. All the highest promises of the inspired page centre there. There the universal knowledge of God overspreads the earth as the waters cover the sea. There the wolf dwells with the lamb, and the leopard lies down with the kid. There the people are all righteous. It is there we must look for the land where violence is heard no more,—the borders where there is neither wasting nor destruction. There are the greatness and fulness of that kingdom for the coming of which Christians have been praying for the last eighteen hundred years. Those glorious times are coming; they shall come; they must come; nor can we suppose that they are now far off. The Jews are already asking the way Zion-ward; and soon there shall be a moving amongst the dry bones of poor, outcast, weather-beaten Israel. The Divine breath which alone can give them life, shall soon breathe upon the slain of their valley, and they shall live, and stand on their feet.

Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem! She has stumbled—she has been broken off as a branch; but, fallen and prostrate as she is, they still shall prosper that love her. Blessed is every one that blesseth her even in her fall.

You observe it is said of those nations which shall be converted to Christ by the instrumentality of the Jews, that they shall be brought with "joy and glad-

ness." Now, this is also spoken in the very spirit of the Evangelist. You recollect what our Lord Himself says on the subject:—"The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." (Matt. xiii. 44.) Now, the joy of having found the treasure of the Evangelist, exactly corresponds with the joy and gladness with which the nations are brought to Christ in the Psalmist. And in both we have the very marrow of Christianity. In both the excellency and loveliness of Christ and His Gospel are implied. From both we would infer that He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. The joy and rejoicing at having found Him are the most eloquent tributes that can be offered in His praise. Here is one who was brought to the King; one who found the hid treasure and sold all that he had, and bought the field; and listen to the language of his joy and rejoicing: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him." (Phil. iii. 7, 9.) No wonder the nations should come with joy and gladness; no wonder the finder of the hid treasure should, for joy that he had found it, sell all that he had and buy the field; if all things else are but loss and dung compared with the knowledge of Christ.

We have seen that the Jewish Church will be expected to forget her own people and her father's house when she

shall be converted to Christianity. She shall not be exempted from the requirements of that universal law, "if any man leave not house, and brethren, and land, he cannot be my disciple." But notice now how the other side of the Gospel rule is here brought out by the Psalmist. "There is no man," says the Gospel, "that has left house, or friends, or possessions, for Christ's sake, but shall receive a hundredfold more, even in this life." And so says the Psalmist, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." As if he had said, "Thou art required to forget thine own people and thy father's house when thou comest to Christ; but do not fear, thou shalt not be a loser. Thy sons shall be greater and more illustrious than were thy fathers. Thou shalt make them princes in all the earth; and they shall add a lustre to thy name, before which the fame of thy boasted ancestry shall hide its head. Thy name shall never be forgotten; but it will be to the greatness of thy sons, and not of thy sires, that thou shalt owe its undyingness. Thou extollest thyself because of thy descent from the patriarchs, and because of the illustrious men of thy line; but it shall be not on account of thy distinguished ancestry and illustrious house, but for thy sons' glorious works of Christian love and zeal, that the people will praise thee for ever and ever."

Such appears to be the meaning of the last two verses of the Psalm.*

* The last two verses are generally regarded as an address to the king. Bishop Horsley, in his Sermons on this Psalm, understands the last verse as spoken to the king: but in his notes to

When children of the Church are said to be made princes by the Church, the meaning evidently is that they will become great and mighty in zeal, devotedness, and success, in the work of the Christian ministry. The true Church of Christ has neither the will nor the power to make princes in any other sense of the word. The Jews in their converted state will send out missionaries, preachers, and teachers, to every corner of the earth, who, like their great forefather, will so prevail in wrestling for blessings on their labours, that, like him, they may well be called princes—princes of God.

It will be the unwearied efforts of those devoted men that will make converted Israel so wonderfully instrumental in bringing the remnant of the heathen nations into the fold of Christ. We must not suppose that the conversion of the heathen will follow as a necessary and unconditional consequence of the conversion of the Jews. We must not dream of a simultaneous casting away of the last relics of idolatry and superstition, as if it were the instantaneous effect of some overwhelming display of Divine power. It will be the devotedness of Israel's Christian sons in their work of faith and labour of love, that will be the instrument, in God's hands, of filling the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

We read in the last verse, "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations." Now, this is a correct

his Translation of the Psalms, regards both verses as addressed to the consort. The order of the whole Psalm is this; verse 1st, introduction; verses 2—9, an address to the king; verses 10—17, to the consort.

translation of the Hebrew text, as we have it at present; but some of those versions of the Bible that were made before, or shortly after the Christian era, translate as if they had found the verb in the plural *—"*They* shall make thy name to be remembered." That is, those children whom thou wilt make princes in all lands, *they* shall do it. As if he had said, "The blessings that will follow their labours shall be spoken of from generation to generation, until time itself shall be no longer, and thus thy name shall never be forgotten." This appears to be the correct reading; and the succeeding words seem to follow it more naturally than that of our Authorized Version, namely, "*Therefore* shall the people praise thee for ever and ever." It is as if he had said, "When the tale is told in after ages how thy sons came proclaiming the good news of Calvary to their fathers, while they still lay in the darkness and shadow of death, the people shall bless thee for having given birth to such sons, and for having sent them forth on such an errand of love." It will be because the fame of the Jewish Church shall be perpetuated by the everlasting remembrance of blessings received, that she shall be praised for ever and ever.

Brethren, we have now reached the end of the Forty-fifth Psalm; and what a wide field of both time and space

* Septuagint and Vulgate, "They shall be mindful of thy name," &c. Chaldee paraphrase, "At that time ye shall say, we will make mention of thy name," &c. Syriac, "Make them lords over all the earth, that we may be mindful of thy name," &c. Coptic, "And they shall remember thy name," &c. The verb, however, being in Hiphil, signifies not to remember, or to be mindful of, but to *cause* to be remembered.

has passed before us, as we watched the majestic roll of this remarkable vision of the inspired penman! First came Christ Himself in the flesh—the fairer than the children of men—the eloquent and persuasive Teacher. We next discovered Him after He had risen from the dead, as He went forth conquering and to conquer, an armour-clad Warrior; and by the might of His single arm, established His Gospel-kingdom in the world. Then we found Him on His throne, with the Gentile nations around Him as so many handmaids, and the Jewish nation at His right hand. Thence we followed—(for we were obliged to follow—the vision revolved no longer before us—it was pointed out to us in the distance)—we followed the future history of the converted Jews, and saw them out in all nations persuading men concerning the things of Christ, and saw all nations by their instrumentality brought into the fold of the Christian Church. Here, then, is the Church's universal history, from the first dawn of its existence, until it shall have overspread the earth's compass. Here is the stone cut out without hands gradually becoming a great mountain, and filling the whole earth.

Let us thank God for this Psalm. It magnifies our conceptions of Christ and His kingdom, and ought to fill us with gratitude and joy that we are subjects of such a King. If we love Christ and His cause, how rejoiced we ought to be to know that that cause must ever prosper! And if we desire immortality and life, how must we exult to know that the subject of this Psalm has promised immortality and life to all who are His! Here we have

that which can satisfy the deepest longings and cravings of the soul. Let us be thankful. Let us bless God at all times for these His inestimable benefits, and let us, by lives devoted to His service, show the world how we value His goodness.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

PSALM CX. 1.

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

TO-DAY we enter on the consideration of another Psalm, written by David, concerning his Son and Lord; and, without exception, the most remarkable Psalm in the whole hundred and fifty.* Nor is it only the most remarkable: it is perhaps the most precious also. No matter in what light we regard it, this hundred-and-tenth Psalm is a priceless treasure to the Church of Christ. Regard it merely as a prophecy of our Divine Lord—and it is so pointedly a prophecy, and bears on the face of it such unmistakeable marks of its heavenly original—that you must feel, as you read it, that you are mingling in Divine things. Altogether apart from the matter of it, it is of inestimable value to the heart searching after Divine truth; for if not the brightest, it is, at least, one of the brightest lights that lead the benighted soul to the sun of righteousness. No sophistry

* "Indeed there is not a Psalm like it in the whole Scripture; and it ought to be very dear unto the Church, seeing that it confirms that great article of faith, Christ's sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."—*Luther. Cole's Translation.*

can dim its lustre. Modern Jews, and dark-minded Gentiles, have essayed to do it, but in vain. They might as well have tried to darken the bright sun in his noonday beauty. It shines out still, and it shall continue to shine—a glorious, heavenly light—a beacon and a guiding star, pointing humanity to the great Light that once shone in Bethlehem, on Calvary, and Olivet.

But when we regard the matter of this Psalm, then, indeed, we shall find reason for joy and exultation. I speak of ourselves as Christians—as those who are one with Christ, and Christ with them; for as there is no cause for joy held forth for other than these in the whole page of God's revealed will, so especially in this Psalm. Like all that relates to Christ, if it is a savour of life unto life to all who are His, it is a savour of death unto death to all who are not His. To those who love Him in sincerity, there is a mine here of peace, and comfort, and joy, which is accessible under every conceivable exigency, and which is too fertile and unbounded to be ever exhausted.

"What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" once asked Christ Himself of the Pharisees who had congregated to recover the laurels which the Sadducees had lost. "The son of David," they replied. "And how then doth David in spirit call him Lord?" He asked again, "saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" This was a question which struck dumb with wonder His quibbling assailants. "No man was able to answer him a word," reports the Evangelist, "neither durst any man

(not even the lawyer who, Tertullus-like, had come to lead on the attack) from that day forth ask him any more questions." And, brethren, why could none of those shrewd, captious men answer Him a word? If it had not been the universal belief among those Jews that this Psalm was a prophecy of Christ, the son of David, and that it related to none but Him, the question could have been very easily answered. If there had been even one in that crowd of spiteful men who regarded this Psalm as written of Abraham, or David, or Solomon, or Hezekiah, he would have at once replied, "The question is based on an erroneous supposition; it takes it for granted that the hundred-and-tenth Psalm is a prophecy of Christ, and this is a position which I do not concede." The very fact of those Pharisees not being able to answer Him a word, shows that a doubt about the Messianic import of the Psalm had not even entered their minds. Here, therefore, brethren, you have Christ's divinity clearly implied. He was David's son, and yet David here in spirit calls Him Lord. Now, no son can be his father's lord by the law of natural generation; consequently, Christ's lordship over David must have been derived from another generation, and a higher one.

But you will ask, To what period of Christ's history do these words of the Psalmist refer? On what occasion are we to suppose God the Father to have said to Christ, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool"? St. Peter answers this question in his speech to the assembled multitudes on the day of Pentecost. "David," he says, "is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my

Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts ii. 34, 35, 36.) God is therefore represented by the Psalmist as addressing those words to Christ on His ascension into heaven. It was after He had raised Him from the dead, and highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name, that He addressed Him in the language of this Psalm. And here observe, that David, who wrote a thousand years before Christ was born in Bethlehem, speaks of His ascension as a thing already accomplished, "The Lord *said*," he says, not *shall* say. He speaks as if he had actually heard the Almighty voice saying to Jesus, as He ascended on high, having led captivity captive, "Sit thou on my right hand." See how time fades away before the presence of the great Illuminator.

And here observe the different points of view in which Christ is presented to us in these three Psalms, namely, the second, forty-fifth, and hundred-and-tenth. In the second, it is the rage and fury of the nations that occupy the foreground. Christ is indeed brought before us at last as the King on Zion; but neither His person nor His kingship is the prominent object. In the forty-fifth, Christ is assuredly the prominent object, but He is prominent in a variety of characters. Whereas, in the hundred-and-tenth, the King stands out in almost lonely dignity—simply a King in the serenity of His greatness, or in the fury of His wrath. But though seen in these three different points of view in these three remarkable Psalms, there are some characters peculiar to Him which cannot be hid, no matter in what light He is regarded.

Whether He is proclaimed the Son of God by an irrevocable decree; whether He rides forth an armour-girt warrior conquering and to conquer; or whether He is seated at the right hand of His Father in the heavens, His irresistibility of power, and universality of dominion, shine out conspicuously, distinguishing Him from all the other sons of men. In all the three Psalms, moreover, this power and dominion are represented as being derived directly from God the Father. In the second Psalm, as you recollect, the Father conferred them, when He said, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." In the forty-fifth, He conferred them when, as the God of Christ, He anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. And in the Psalm before us, the words of investiture are the words under our consideration, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Thus, there are two great doctrines which we learn from each of these three Psalms, namely—*first*, that Christ's kingdom must extend from sea to sea, and from the flood to the ends of the earth; and *second*, that these glorious expectations are founded on the covenant engagements of Jehovah Himself. His word and honour are pledged for their accomplishment, and therefore they must be accomplished. Christ must sit on the throne of the world; the nations must become His possession; all enemies must be made His footstool.

When Christ is said to sit on the right hand of God, you will understand that He is said to do so in allusion to the eminence and power to which He is exalted. The right hand is the emblem of honour. Thus, as we read in

1 Kings ii. 19, when Solomon would confer particular honour on his mother Bathsheba, he made her sit at his right hand. And as we have already seen, the Queen Consort, or restored Jewish Church, to whom, in the language of Micah, "belonged the dominion," is represented in the forty-fifth Psalm, as standing at the right hand of Christ. The right hand is also the emblem of power; as is evident from numberless passages, where God's right hand is said to perform great acts, to do wonders, and to bring mighty things to pass. To sit at the right hand of God, therefore, is to be exalted to the highest power and the highest dignity. And in accordance with this, St. Peter tells us that "Christ is gone into heaven, and is exalted at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." He does not say, you observe, that they *shall be* made subject unto Him, but that they *are* made subject already; implying that His very position at God's right hand has invested Him with dominion over all creation. And St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians (i. 21), speaks in a similar strain: "God hath set Christ at his own right hand in heavenly places," He says, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the Church."

Here, then, we have New Testament comment on Old Testament prophecy. The sitting at God's right hand supposes, according to the Apostles, an exaltation to the highest power, dignity, and dominion. Now take this fact

in connexion with what St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Hebrews; and then, if you do not find matter for joy and exultation, it is a sure sign that you are as yet strangers to the power of the Gospel of Jesus. "Christ sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," says that Apostle, "*when he had* by himself purged our sins." (Heb. i. 3.) Or, as it is expressed in another place, "This man, *after he had offered* one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb. ix. 12.) It was after Christ's great work was done—after, by His one sacrifice for sins for ever, He had purged our sins away, that He ascended to that pinnacle of honour, might, and dominion. It is *our* best friend, therefore, *our* greatest benefactor—He who, having loved us at the first, loves us to the end—who sits on that exalted throne in the highest heavens. Infinite love, united with infinite power, is enthroned there on our behalf at God's right hand! And yet we doubt, and grieve, and murmur, and repine, at the little annoyances of an ephemeral world, as if we believed all this to be a dream! Our best friend is Head over all things, and that, too, for our sakes; and yet we cannot trust Him, we cannot do away with anxiety and care, unless we see with our own eyes the end and aim of everything that befalls us. No wonder the Scriptures tell us that "without faith it is impossible to please God;" for can there be anything so displeasing, even to our own low humanity, as this incessant doubting, this dishonouring, suspecting, not to say positive disbelieving, of the fullest professions of friendship and good-will? When the Christian murmurs and repines, he insults his Lord. There are occasions, indeed, in which he must weep.

Jesus Himself wept. The tide of human sympathy and affection is sometimes too full to be restrained—it must overflow its banks, or the heart would burst. But we may rejoice while we weep, and the tears of sorrow should never drown the voice of gratitude. Christ's love and unceasing care are as fully evinced in the inscrutable providence and the dark visitation as in the brightest and sunniest blessing that was ever poured into a human bosom. He is Head over all things to His Church—over the frowns of adversity as well as over the smiles of prosperity; and, therefore, all things, whatever they are, must necessarily work for the good of His people. To teach otherwise is to blaspheme Christ's majesty—it is to accuse Him of inefficiency—it is treason. If He is Head over all things for His Church, then to say that all things are not governed so as to subserve the best interests of His Church is to pronounce Christ unworthy of the position which He occupies; it is to endeavour to hurl Him from His throne! Thus the exaltation of our glorified Head is the surest earnest, not only of the safety and protection of His people, but also of the bestowal upon them of every blessing which Infinite Wisdom sees they require.

And observe: The Christian *is* not only blessed with safety and protection by his exalted Lord, he is also made partaker of His eminence and dignity. In the second Psalm, you recollect, we learned that because Christ was said to rule the nations with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel, the Christian was also said to do the same. We should have expected, therefore, by a parity of reasoning, that as Christ is exalted at the right hand of God, the Christian should be also exalted along

with Him; and, accordingly, we find such to be the case. There is such a close but mysterious union between Christ and His people, that wherever He is, there they are also. The following is the language of St. Paul, and it is remarkable language:—"When we were dead in sins, God hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us *sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*" (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) The Apostle, you observe, speaks here of that as already accomplished, which shall have its literal accomplishment only when our mortal shall have put on immortality. He had such a realizing sense of the closeness of the tie between Christ and the believer, that he overlooked the short interval in which they are bodily separated, and regarded them as sitting and reigning together. But hear the "will" of Christ expressed by Himself on this subject:—"Father, *I will* that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me *where I am,* that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) "*I will* that they be with me where I am!" Oh, what a heaven of glory and joy is there in that "I will!" It ought to light up our path with the purest sunshine in the darkest hours of our pilgrimage. Here is a word as almighty as that which said, "Let light be!" and light was. What, then, have we to fear? At what should we murmur or repine? What though trials and sorrows rain on our head as thick as the hail of heaven?—we know that they cannot rain long. Shall we sink under the annoyances of an hour, when we hear the voice of heaven's King proclaiming, "*I will* that they be with me *where I am*"? Surely not. There is a soother of all our sorrows, a dispeller of all our anxieties,

a lightener of all our griefs, ay, and a converter of sorrows, anxieties, and griefs into joys and rejoicings, in that glorious "I will."

But hear a direct promise of the adorable Jesus on this same subject:—"To him that overcometh *will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne.*" (Rev. iii. 21.) "*Even as!*" mark the oneness of Christ and the believer, not only in spirit, but also in greatness and exaltation. You recollect how our Lord prayed that His disciples might be one with Him as He was one with the Father. And so here, in a similar outflowing of the Divine will, He declares that, as He sits exalted with the Father, so shall he that overcometh sit exalted with Him! See how humanity is raised to the possession of the prerogatives of Divinity! See here the crowning blessing of that mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh! Our humanity sits at the helm of the universe in the person of Christ Jesus. In Him it is exalted above every name that is named in heaven or in earth; and to us, as one with Him, and in Him, belong privileges and a dignity which poor, frail man is almost afraid to utter. These things are indeed the mystery of godliness, and we can only bow, and bless, and adore.

But Christ is set down at the right hand of God not only for the exaltation of His friends but also for the subjugation of His foes. "Sit thou at my right hand," says God, "*until I make thine enemies thy footstool;*" as if Christ were exalted for no other purpose than the casting under His feet all who opposed themselves to His sovereignty. But we shall see as we proceed that

the subjugation of Christ's foes implies and involves the exaltation of His friends; and, on the other hand, that when His friends are exalted it must of necessity be on the necks of His enemies.

Here, you observe, there is a limited time assigned to the session of Christ at God's right hand. It is *until* His enemies are made His footstool. We found, in our consideration of the second Psalm, that our Divine Lord's Messiahship was of an economical character, and that as it began when He rose from the dead, so it would end when the work for which He had assumed it had been accomplished. To Him, as the Messiah, belong the nations of the world as His inheritance and possession. God engaged to bestow them upon Him as a reward for His sufferings on man's behalf. Therefore, Christ having suffered—having finished the work which *He* had undertaken to accomplish—God says to Him, "Sit thou on my right hand till I fulfil *my* part of the engagement." Now, when God the Father's part of the engagement shall be fulfilled, and all the world shall be given to Christ, the whole Messianic economy will then have come to an end; the work will be done for the accomplishment of which He had become the Messiah, and as a matter of course His character of Messiah shall continue no longer. St. Paul expresses a similar sentiment when he says, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself (that is the Messianic Son—the Resurrection Son) be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 28.) When all things shall be subdued unto Christ, then His work shall be done—the great economy of

Bethlehem, Gethsemane, and Calvary shall have come to an end; and why continue an office when it is no longer required? Christ, therefore, shall sit at God's right hand until His enemies are made His footstool, and only till then.

It is evident, to speak in the language of St. Paul, that all things are not yet put under Christ. He is described by that Apostle as in a state of expectancy, awaiting the accomplishment of His Father's engagement. "He is set down at the right hand of God," he says, "from henceforth *expecting* till his enemies be made his footstool." (Heb. x. 12, 13.) The subduing process is going on: enemy after enemy is being brought low, and the final issue—the complete victory—is as sure as Jehovah's promise can make it. Where are now the racks, the fires, the gibbets, the crucifixions, the tortures of inquisitions? They have vanished with their inventors; and their existence as a thing of history proclaims that God hath put many of Christ's enemies under His feet already. True, the persecuting spirit is not yet extinct. The breath of Popery keeps it alive, though the arm of Popery can no longer toss the torch on high. Spain still sends her sons to the galleys for reading the Bible; she sends them to the galleys, for she dares not send them to the flames. The voice of Christendom would thunder its abhorrence of the deed; and the hand of Christendom would tear the faggot out of her inebriated grasp. Ay, and the time is near when Spain shall no longer send her sons even to the galleys for reading the Bible. If she persist in refusing the yoke of Christ's love, she shall be made to feel the sword of His vengeance. If she quench

not the fire of her antichristian zeal, her own fire shall be quenched for ever. "The nation and kingdom that will not serve him shall perish." (Isa. lx. 12.)

But when it is said *all* enemies shall be put under Christ's feet, our minds are naturally led beyond the Herods and Pilates, the Neros and Caligulas, the fanatical priests and superstitious monarchs, that have hitherto stood up against the Lord and against His Anointed. St. Paul numbers death among those enemies, and calls it the "last that shall be destroyed." (1 Cor. xv. 26.) Now we all know that death is a consequence of sin—its natural and necessary fruit, and that therefore so long as there is sin there must be death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." (Rom. v. 12.) The destruction of death, therefore, presupposes the destruction of sin. And here what a wide field opens up before us! We see the hosts of human lusts and passions that have been drawn up, as it were, in battle array to meet the charge of the Almighty Conqueror, routed, dispersed, vanquished, and annihilated. Now Christ's greatest and most numerous foes lurk in men's bosoms: indeed, it is there that all the opposition and hostility which the world has ever manifested to Himself and His cause, have been engendered and hatched. When, therefore, this brood of human lusts and passions shall be subdued, all shall be subdued. When "the imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, shall be cast down, and every thought be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 5), then a greater work shall be done towards setting up Christ's universal

kingdom in the world than would be the overthrowing of a thousand false systems of religion, or the hurling to the ground all the religious persecutors on the face of the earth. That is a great and remarkable promise of the Prophet Micah, and one the fulfilment of which will usher in the brightest era of the Church's history, "God will *subdue* our iniquities." (Micah xvii. 19.) Here is a work of subjugation before which all that the world has ever yet witnessed sinks into insignificance. To subdue kings, to subdue kingdoms,—what are these things compared with the subduing of man's iniquities?

I have said that the destruction of Christ's enemies implies and necessitates the safety, happiness, and exaltation of His friends. For is not iniquity the ruin of humanity? Is not sin its misery? Let sin and iniquity be destroyed, and man *must* be happy as well as secure. Moreover, is it not sin that hangs like a leaden weight round our necks, and keeps us from rising to that position amongst the creatures of God's universe which we were originally intended to occupy? Let sin be destroyed, therefore, and we shall rise by the impetus of our own nature; our exaltation to a higher and a nobler stage of being will ensue as a necessary consequence. And this subduing of sin, lust, and passion will be a making of Christ's foes His footstool, for all our enemies are His enemies, and all His are ours.

And what a bright and heavenly sunshine breaks in here upon the path of the Christian! His Lord is exalted at God's right hand for the very purpose of subduing and destroying everything that would mar his onward progress to perfection and happiness. His

enemies are the enemies of Christ, and therefore they must all be subdued—all put under His feet. The easily besetting sin, whether it be the devil, the world, or the flesh that gives it its charms and its poison, shall be overcome—it is Christ's enemy, and therefore must wallow in the dust. The policy of princes, the wisdom of philosophy, the dogmas of religion, if they are at variance with God's revealed will, and therefore dangerous to the Christian's welfare, must be cast to the ground. Nay, sin and Satan, death and the grave, must also perish before the Almighty Conqueror; they are enemies of Christ and the Christian and therefore their doom is sealed. There shall be one universal wreck of all things that now work evil; they shall sink beneath the waves of God's overwhelming wrath, and rise no more for ever.

"Then shall the redeemed of the Lord come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." (Isa. li. 11.)

DISCOURSE XIX.

PSALM CX. 2—4.

"The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

FROM the first verse of this Psalm we have learned that the end of Christ's session at His Father's right hand is the subjugation of His enemies, and the consequent exaltation of His friends. We have also found the time during which Christ will continue to sit there, namely, until all His enemies be made His footstool. All this we learned from the word or oracle of Jehovah Himself.

In the verses under our consideration to-day, it is David that speaks and not God. David has just heard the Word of Jehovah to Him whom he calls his Lord, and now he bursts forth into the congratulatory address of a prophet to that Lord Himself. He brings before Him (or rather he brings before us, for it was for our sakes that the Psalm was written)—he brings before Him some of the features and modes of that mighty operation, by which Jehovah's promises should be fulfilled. God's promises must be fulfilled, brethren; and God fulfils His promises Himself, but yet not in such

a way as to set aside the use of means. David hears God saying, "Until *I* make thine enemies thy footstool;" and then, as God's prophet, he turns round and informs us how that thing shall be accomplished. The words imply an absolute decree of God Himself, and yet there will be a variety of instrumentalities required in working it out; God pronounces the decree, His prophet enumerates the means and modes of its fulfilment.

We are first informed from whence, as the central point, the work of putting all His enemies under Christ's feet shall commence: "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength *out of Zion.*" It is next implied that this work shall be accomplished not only in the face, but also in the very *midst* of hostility and opposition: "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." The Psalmist then notices two great characteristics of the whole time thus occupied in putting all things under Christ's feet, namely, *power* and *wrath.* The day of His power will be distinguished by the holiness and numbers of His people; and the day of His wrath by the vengeance that will be poured out on all those who shall have set themselves in opposition to His sovereignty. It will be by the development of Christ's kingdom under these two different characters that all enemies shall be put under His feet. In other words, Christ's universal kingdom will be set up in the world not only by the multiplication of saints, but also by the cutting off of sinners. Such is the general scope of the Psalm from the second verse to the end. We shall now proceed to particulars.

"The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion," says the Psalmist. The rod is the sceptre, the emblem of sovereignty. Queen Victoria wields the rod—

the sceptre; that is, she reigns, or rules. The rod or sceptre of Christ's power shall be sent out of Zion, that is, His kingdom shall originate there. "The sceptre of thy strength," that is, the sceptre by which thou art strong; the sceptre by wielding which thou shalt reign with irresistible sway. You recollect the Psalmist says in the forty-fifth Psalm, speaking to Christ, "The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." Now it is in the rightness or straightness of Christ's sceptre, or in other words, in the righteousness and justice of His reign that the strength of His kingdom consists. He is anointed with the oil of gladness *above His fellows;* that is, His kingdom is greater and more glorious than any other kingdom, for the simple reason that He loved righteousness and hated iniquity. The rod or sceptre of Christ's strength must therefore be a right sceptre, and it must be in its rightness and straightness that His great strength lies. The rod of His strength is the righteousness of His rule.

This rod or sceptre, we are next informed, shall be sent out of Zion. We may regard this as a prophecy of similar import with that of Isaiah ii. 3, where He says, "*Out of Zion* shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." You recollect how our Divine Lord Himself just before His ascension commanded His Disciples to tarry at Jerusalem until He sent them the promise of the Father; "for" said He, "it behoved that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem.*" (Luke xxiv. 47.) "It behoves that it should be so," He says, "for *thus it is written,*" referring doubtlessly to this very Psalm under our consideration. The Gospel

therefore *must* begin to be preached from Jerusalem—there was a necessity that it should be so, that is, the kingdom that Christ came into the world to set up, must begin there—the rod or sceptre must go out of Zion. And we all know that such was actually the case. It was when the Disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem that the Holy Ghost was poured out so miraculously on the day of Pentecost. From that time the word of the Gospel spread among all nations—men went everywhere preaching the Word, and thus the rod of Christ's strength was sent out of Zion.

The rod of Christ's strength is the life and efficacy of that Gospel the preaching of which is said to be the power of God. And observe, it is the Father, and not the Son, who is said to send this rod out of Zion. It is the rod of the Son's strength, and yet it is the Father who sends it. Our Lord Himself expresses a kindred thought when He says, "The Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." Where, observe, it is the Father who is said to send the Holy Ghost; and yet He does so in the name of the Son; that is, on the Son's behalf, commissioned, if we may so speak, to carry on the Son's work in the world. The Father, as we have already seen, promised the kingdoms of the world to Christ as a reward for His sufferings; and therefore He sends the Holy Ghost to secure the fulfilment of that promise. Now, the Word of God, accompanied by the Holy Ghost, is the rod of Christ's strength—the sceptre of His kingdom—the sceptre which will bring back the rebel states to their allegiance to their lawful sovereign: God, therefore, in sending the rod of Christ's

strength out of Zion, sends it merely as the instrument wherewith to fulfil His covenant engagement with Christ.

The Gospel having come out of Zion or Jerusalem, we are next informed that it shall be surrounded on all sides by enmity and opposition. "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies," says the Psalmist. Just as it was said in the forty-fifth Psalm, "People shall fall under thee in the heart or midst of the king's enemies." Or, as in the second, Christ's kingdom is set up in the world in spite of all the rage, fury, and opposition of the nations and their rulers. You see how the whole history of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, no matter in what light we regard it, is nothing but one great warfare. Whether we regard it as developed in the individual Christian, it is a warfare; or whether we regard the whole scheme of it in the abstract, it is a warfare. Christ rules and reigns, but it is in the midst of enemies; the Christian rules and reigns in and by Christ, but it is in the midst of enemies also. Accordingly, you recollect, the Apostle calls the Christian's course "a fight—a fight of faith," and advises him to "put on the whole armour of God, that he may be able to stand in the evil day." Flesh and blood on the one hand, spiritual wickedness in high places on the other, if we rule, it must needs be in the midst of enemies. But we shall rule; Christ shall be conqueror, if His foes were ten thousand times as numerous and as mighty as they are. Let us not despair when we find the spirit willing but the flesh weak—when we are "sore let and hindered" in running the way of God's commandments. Christ shall rule, and His people shall rule with Him, in spite of all the hidden snares and open assaults of Satan and his

delusions, the flesh and its cravings, the world and its enticements. There could be no warfare if there were no enemies to contend with; there could be no laurels where there had been no victory; and what would be the meaning of a crown where there had been no cross? It is the Christian's safety, therefore, that his Lord shall rule, and it is his glory that He shall rule in the midst of enemies.

The Psalmist having thus predicted the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem as the central point, and having pointed to the irresistibility of Christ's sway in the world, next brings under our notice the sanctity and multitude of His people. He associates with the flourishing state of things which he here contemplates the idea of power, as in the latter verses of the Psalm he associates with the destruction of Christ's enemies the idea of wrath. "Thy people shall be willing," he says, "in the day of thy power*"—implying that this willingness shall be the sign

* Many render this passage, "In the day of thine armies." Calvin: "Thy people shall come with voluntary offerings at the time of the assembling of thine armies." Rosenmüller: "In die exercitus tui—in the day of thy army" ("Messianic Psalms, Biblical Cabinet," vol. xxxii.). They regard the Psalmist as speaking of a battle, Christ's forces being drawn up on one side, and those of His enemies on the other. Hengstenberg says with sufficient confidence, "The day of battle—that is what is meant—is," &c. On the contrary, there is no such thing as a battle, properly so called, implied in any part of the Psalm. In the latter part of it, indeed, Christ may be regarded in the character of a warrior; but He is so simply as an executioner of wrath: the idea of resistance on the part of His enemies does not seem to have once entered the Psalmist's mind. Moreover, when Christ treads the winepress of His anger, He does it alone, and

and accompaniment of Christ's power, rather than the effect of it.* You will see that the words "shall be" are printed in different type from the rest of the verse; and this is done to show that there are no words corresponding to them in the original Hebrew. So that if the phrase were translated word for word it would be, "Thy people willing in the day of thy power." But the word here rendered willing properly signifies "freewill offerings," consequently the literal rendering of the passage would be, "Thy people freewill offerings in the day of thy power." I have no doubt, moreover, that the colon should be placed after the word "holiness," and not after the word "morning," as our English translators have placed it. The reading would then be, "Thy people freewill offerings in the day of thy power in the beauties of holiness:" (pause at the word holiness, and then begin the next sentence) "from the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth."

Here, then, brethren, we have certain marks of Christ's people which it is our truest interest to consider carefully,

of the people there are none with Him. (Isa. lxiii. 3.) It is He *Himself* who dashes the nations in pieces like a potter's vessel. (Ps. ii. 9.) It is His own right hand that teaches him terrible things. (Ps. xlv. 4.)

* If Christ's power be regarded in itself, then it is always the day of Christ's power (for He is always powerful), and consequently His people must be always "willing;" but such is evidently not the meaning here intended. If, on the other hand, the Psalmist be understood to refer to the flourishing state of Christ's kingdom as the evidence of His power in the capacity of King, then the language will be simply descriptive of His people —they shall be willing in offering themselves to His service, and adorned with the ornaments of a holy life.

with the view of ascertaining whether they belong to ourselves or not. Christ's people are a willing people, and they are also adorned with the beauties or ornaments of holiness. They are willing in respect of offerings (for that, as we have seen, is the force of the word); themselves, and all that they have and are, are offerings to Christ. It is only when Christians are thus ready and willing to devote themselves, their powers, their energies, and their resources to Christ, that His cause can flourish. When Christians are cold and worldly, selfish and covetous, caring for their own things rather than for the things of the Gospel, then, indeed, it is the day, not of Christ's power, but of His weakness. The strength of Christianity must ever be in proportion to the readiness of its children to spend and be spent for Christ. It is impossible for you to have a surer and more infallible sign that you are not Christ's people, than to find in yourselves a want of willingness and readiness to labour in His cause. Brethren, let us ask, What have *we* offered as Christ's willing people? Ourselves, our souls, and bodies? Nay, but have we offered our gold and our silver? It is a useless and unacceptable offering that we make when we offer ourselves, but withhold our possessions. God abhors it. It is the blind and lame of our flocks that we have brought. He who offers himself rather than his gold is a greater abomination to God than if a dead dog were offered on His altar. The man who honours not God with his substance is still His enemy—still the slave of Satan.

Another mark of Christ's people is that they are adorned with the beauties or ornaments of holiness. "In the beauties of holiness," says the Psalmist; that is,

dressed in them—surrounded with them as with a garment. In the ninety-sixth Psalm we find these two things—namely, offerings to the Lord, and the beauties of holiness, similarly connected, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth." Observe how the Psalmist connects the idea of beauty with that of holiness, and how he also associates with it the notion of giving and offering. Indeed, these three things are inseparable—namely, offerings, holiness, and beauty. Where there are no offerings there is no holiness; and where there is no holiness there is no spiritual beauty. You recollect how St. Paul informs us that the *new man* is created in righteousness and true holiness. Righteousness and true holiness are the marks, the essential characteristics, of the new creature. And again he says, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." He contrasts this holiness with uncleanness in one place (1 Thes. iv. 7); no wonder, therefore, that no man shall see the Lord without holiness. The unclean were excluded from God's sanctuary—they might not see even God's courts, and therefore much less God Himself. Examine yourselves, therefore, not only whether you are in the faith; but also whether your faith worketh by love; whether you continue not in faith only, but also in faith and holiness (1 Tim. ii. 15). Christ's people are "chosen by God that they should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. i. 4); they are "his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10); they are "a peculiar people

zealous of good works." (Tit. ii. 14.) If, therefore, you are not holy and without blame before Him in love; if you are not zealous of the good works which have been ordained for you to walk in; you have no right to regard yourselves as God's people. It is only when we obey His voice indeed, and keep His covenant, that we may be called His peculiar treasure. (Ex. xix. 5.)

The beauties of holiness mentioned in this place correspond to the fine linen, clean and white, which in Rev. xix. 8 is said to be the righteousness of saints. When Christians fulfil the end of their calling, and live and act as Christians ought to live and act—live by faith, and work by love, then they are adorned with the beauties of holiness; they are clad with the fine linen, clean and white; they have, as the Zion of God, put on their beautiful garments; and to them may be addressed the language of the loving Bridegroom, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem." (Cant. vi. 4.)

Be not deceived. No fancied witnessings of the Spirit in the heart; no ardent longings after God's house and sanctuary; no fervour in the exercises of prayer and praise; nothing, in short, that ends with mere feeling, are proofs that you belong to the number of Christ's people. If you know Christ's will, happy are ye if ye do it, but not otherwise. It is not he that crieth, Lord, Lord, but he that *doeth* the will of God, that shall enter heaven. It is faith that saves us, indeed; but then it is a faith that worketh—worketh by love. (Gal. v. 6.)

The Psalmist having thus mentioned the willingness, readiness, and liberality of Christ's people, and having described them as adorned with all the beauties of a holy

life, next informs us of the source of their generation. "From the womb of the morning," he says, "thou hast the dew of thy youth." The word translated "youth" signifies progeny or offspring; and therefore the meaning of the phrase is, Christ has His offspring, or progeny, or young generation, from the womb of the morning. The word "youth" is contrasted with the word "people" in the beginning of the verse. The Psalmist first describes the character of Christ's people, the full-grown men; they are devoted to Christ in righteousness and true holiness. He next points to the source from which those hosts are supplied, and calls it the womb of the morning to notify its heavenly locality.* No wonder they are

* Bishop Lowth explains this passage thus:—"Præ rore qui ex utero Auroræ prodit, ros tibi erit prolis tuæ; copiosior nimirum et numerosior. More than the dew which comes forth from the womb of Aurora shall be to thee the dew of thy offspring; that is more copious and numerous." (*De Sacra Poesi*, Præl. X.) And Bishop Horsley, following Lowth, renders it, "The dew of thy progeny is more than of the womb of the morning." There is, indeeed, in all probability, an allusion to the numbers of Christ's people; but the source whence His people come seems to have been uppermost in the Psalmist's mind. The very construction of the verse shows this,—

"From the womb, from the morning to thee the dew—thy youth."

The notion of dew seems to have arisen out of the expressions, "the womb," "the morning." The Psalmist evidently began to think of the origin or source of Christ's people in His power-day, —"from the womb:" then, finding this origin a heavenly one, he calls it Aurora, or the morning. But the association of womb and Aurora would naturally give the notion of dew (for what but dew descends from Aurora?); he therefore calls this offspring dew, and adds, by way of explanation, "Thy youth—thy young

"willing;" therefore no wonder they are surrounded with the "beauties of holiness," for they have had a heavenly original. Thus, in the brief space of one short verse, the

generation—thy progeny;" youth being put in apposition with dew. If the Psalmist had intended to speak *only* of the numbers of Christ's people, the stars, the sand on the sea-shore, &c., would have been much more obvious figures.

Many of the ancient interpreters altogether ignore the existence of לְךָ טַל ("to thee the dew," or, "thou hast the dew") in this place, and understand the word rendered by our translators "youth" to be a verb signifying "I have begotten." "From the womb before Lucifer, I have begotten thee."—*Sept. and Vulg., &c.* "From the womb from of old I have begotten thee."—*Syriac.* "From the womb before the star of the morning I have begotten thee."—*Coptic.*

But these interpretations are so very foreign to the whole context, that one wonders how they could ever have been adopted. The Chaldee Paraphrast notices the dew; but, as he applies the Psalm to David, he is naturally very wide of the meaning:—"God's tender mercies shall hasten to thee as the descent of the dew: they shall remain confidently with thy generation" (or thy family or race, תּוֹלְדָתֶךָ, tuæ prosapiæ. Aquila understands "from the womb" to signify "from birth;" evidently regarding the prophecy as relating to Adonai personally:—*ἀπὸ μήτρας ἐξ ὠρθρισμένου σοι δρόσος παιδιότητός σου*: From the womb, from the morning dawn, thou hast the dew of thy boyhood. Symmachus gives:—*ως κατ' ὄρθρον σοι δρόσος ἡ νεότης σου*: As in the dawn of the morning thou hast the dew—thy youth. The rendering of the 5th Greek version is, in my judgment, the best that I have seen, ancient or modern:—*ἐκ μήτρας επι ὄρθρου σοι δρόσος ἡ νεότης σου*: From the womb above the morning dawn thou hast the dew—thy youth.

Of the following moderns, the first and last seem to understand the figure as *merely* significant of the numbers of Christ's people:—

Ostervald.—"Ta postérité *sera comme* la rosée *qui est produite* du sein de l'Aurore: Thy posterity shall be as the dew which is produced from the womb of the morning."

Psalmist gives us a most perfect description of Christ's Church and people, their origin, their character, and all that distinguishes them from the rest of the world. And is it not a beautiful and most expressive figure of speech that he uses when he compares the young offspring of Christ's Church to the dew descending upon the earth from the womb of the morning dawn? Here is a race which, in New Testament language, "is born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Men might as well produce the dew that glitters in the morning sunshine as give birth to one individual of the innumerable myriads that flow in to Christ and swell the ranks of His armies year after year.

But there is also an allusion in this figure to the numbers—the countless multitudes, which shall flow into the Church, in the day of Christ's power. We have seen that the willingness and devotedness of Christ's people in His cause, together with the holiness of their lives and conduct, were one great sign of the flourishing state of His kingdom. It is a proof that Christ's power is weak in us, when we are cold and indifferent to His interests, as well as when our lives give the lie to our profession. Now, here is another sign that Christ is reigning mightily in His Church—namely, the conversion of great numbers to the faith, if in heathen lands; or the revival of great

Diodati.—"La rugiada della tua gioventù *ti sarà prodotta* dalla matrice dell'alba: The dew of thy youth shall be produced to thee from the womb of the morning dawn."

Valera.—"*Como* el rocío *que cae* de la matriz del alba, *así* te nacerán los tuyos: As the dew which falls from the womb of the dawn, so shall thy (people) be born to thee."

numbers to the life of godliness, if in Christian. It was the day of Christ's power, in the early ages of the Church, when the Apostles and first missionaries proclaimed the good news of Calvary, and countless multitudes gladly received the Word. It will be the day of Christ's power, still more illustriously, in that coming age when the knowledge of God's glory shall have covered the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

And, even in our own time, it is the day of Christ's power,—though, in a more limited degree; for, thank God! the dew of His offspring is still flowing from the womb of the morning, and His ranks are kept well supplied by the new-born progeny. As the willing and holy "people" pass away to their everlasting habitations, their places are still filled—ay, and more than filled—by their heaven-born successors.

The Psalmist, having thus described the people of Christ, and informed us whence they come, now enters farther into the mystery of their existence. His people are holy—they are born of God; but we must not stop here. There is something beyond. There is a cause for this holiness; there is a reason why the progeny of Christ's Church should descend, like the dew, from heaven. The Psalmist, therefore, penetrates into the very heart of this great secret, and lays bare the very mainspring of these strange and wonderful operations. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent," he says, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." It is the everlasting priesthood of Christ that is the cause of the sanctity and devotion of His people, as well as of the numbers of His heaven-born progeny.

Observe the force of the words:—"The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent—will not rue—will not change His mind." It is as if he had said, "These things that I have spoken of Thy Church, O Christ, may be relied on; for Jehovah, in whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning, hath confirmed Thy priesthood by an oath. Thou art a priest *for ever*, too; and therefore Thy Church can never become extinct; there shall still be some holy devoted ones—still some offspring to sustain its existence."

You are aware that it was as a High-priest that Christ presented the sacrifice of His own death, as an atonement for the sins of His people. It is as a High-priest that He stands between God and us, as our great Mediator. It is through His work as a High-priest, that we are born again of the Holy Spirit. And it is through Him as a High-priest, that we receive the continual assistance of that Spirit, and so go on to perfection. Hence, you see, the peculiar force of Christ's High-priesthood being introduced in this place. That priesthood is the very life and soul of His Church and people; and therefore, so long as it continues, they have nothing to fear. But it shall continue for ever, says the Psalmist; consequently, Christ's Church and people must for ever be secure. "This man," says St. Paul, "because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 24, 25.) "To the uttermost," that is, at all times, and under all circumstances. "He hath an unchangeable priesthood;" and therefore, it must

ever be as efficacious as it is now, or as it was then. "Thou art a priest for ever," says God, in the Psalm; and the Apostle informs us why Christ is a priest for ever, and in what the benefit of His everlasting priesthood consists. "He ever liveth to *make intercession.*" Here, then, is the secret of the heavenly birth and holy devoted life of Christ's people. Their great High-priest ever liveth, and ever liveth to intercede for them, and it is at His intercession that they are made and kept holy. No wonder the Psalmist connects Christ's Melchisedekian priesthood with the multitude and sanctity of His followers! No wonder, after foretelling the flourishing state of the Church, he should direct the eyes of believers to the foundation and source of all its life and prosperity!—"Thou art a priest for ever." Here, brethren, we may rest. Here is a well, from which we may draw, and satisfy our thirsty souls with living water. It is a never-failing spring, too. It is, moreover, guarded by no fence—surrounded by no wall. He that hath no money may come and draw at it, for it is free to every one that thirsteth. "Thou art a priest for ever!" Oh, taste of this living water! Drink deep of its pure streams. It will destroy the mortal within you; it is death's plague and the grave's destruction.

Thus we have found in these few verses a full description of Christ's people—their birth, their character, and their security. They have a heavenly original; "they are born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" they are "a holy people unto the Lord, a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" and they are safe and secure, at all times, and under all circumstances;

for their great High-priest ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Brethren, do we belong to this heaven-begotten race? for this, after all, is the important question. Do we bear their marks? Are we known to be of their number by our fruits? Let us lay aside all vague self-approving fancies, and betake ourselves to the law and to the testimony. Do they justify or condemn? Our highest interest is at stake; nay, our *one* interest, for what are all things else? Let Satan deceive us in the matter of our everlasting welfare, and what is there left in which to be undeceived? Let us cry Peace, peace, to ourselves while there is no peace, and what room is there for wisdom or folly beyond? All that we have, and are, and hope for, is bound up in this—Is our foundation sure? Is the soul safe? Is eternity provided for? Oh, then, let this question be settled, and settled at once. Let there be no temporizing, no indecision, no dreaming uncertainty here. Our great High-priest ever liveth, and with Him is all that we need to ensure our success. To Him, then, let us fly. Of Him let us learn. And Him let us obey. If we will do His will we shall know of His doctrine. If we will serve Him in the beauty of holiness we shall be His people. If we do what He commands us we shall be His disciples. This is the sure foundation; and other foundation can no man lay. Resting here our eternity is safe. For us the many mansions are being prepared. A little while and we shall be taken unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also.

DISCOURSE XX.

PSALM CX. 5, 6, 7.

"The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head."

IN the three verses which we considered in my last discourse, the Psalmist, as you recollect, addressed himself directly to Adonai or Messiah, "Jehovah shall send the rod of *thy* strength." "*Thy* people shall be willing." "*Thou* hast the dew of *thy* youth." In the three verses that I have just read to you the address is no longer directed to Christ, but to God the Father; and Christ is spoken of throughout in the third person. You must imagine David as witnessing in spirit the ascent of the Messiah to the heaven of His glory, and hearing the Father say to Him, "Sit thou at my right hand," to be able to enter into the spirit of the Psalm. It is after he has heard the word of Jehovah, and witnessed the enthronement of Christ, that, as a Prophet in whom their spirit dwells, he addresses each Person separately; first, declaring to the Son what God the Father shall do in His behalf, and how His kingdom shall become established in the world; and next, predicting the Son's exploits in a direct address to the Father. He contemplates both

Persons as sitting together, and therefore he addresses both. We have already considered his address to Adonai, or Christ, and have now to deal with his language to God the Father.

"The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath." You recollect how, in the first verse of the Psalm, David spoke of Christ as being exalted at God's right hand. Christ must, therefore, be the Lord here spoken of. Moreover, it was Adonai who was exalted at the right hand of Jehovah, in the first verse, and accordingly the word here rendered "Lord" by our English translators, is Adonai also. The full construction of this passage would therefore be this:—"Adonai whom thou hast exalted at thy right hand, O Jehovah, shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath."

It is very observable how the Holy Ghost ever takes care to keep us in mind of the fact that Christ is supported by God the Father in His administration of the affairs of His Gospel kingdom in the world. Christ is indeed, the Governor of this kingdom, He is King; but He is God's king. Thus in the second Psalm, you recollect, He is called God's king expressly. "I have set *my* king upon my holy hill of Zion." Again, in the forty-fifth Psalm, He is anointed by God, and set on the everlasting throne which, as God Himself, He occupies. Again, in this hundred-and-tenth, as we have lately seen, Christ shall reign in the midst of His enemies, but it shall be by the rod or sceptre of His strength that God the Father will send out of Zion. And so, in the place before us, He shall smite kings in the day of His wrath; but He will do so when He is seated at God's right hand.

But recollect that all this is said of Christ as He is man. It is as man that He is anointed God's king. It is as man that He wields the sceptre of His strength sent by God out of Zion. It is as man that, exalted at God's right hand, He will smite through kings in the day of His wrath. His own language in St. John v. 26, 27 is very full and explicit on this point. "As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." *Because* he is the Son of man. All this enthronement, wielding of the sceptre, subjugation of the nations, and destruction of principalities and powers, appertain to Christ, because He is the Son of man. It is a man, one in our nature, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, of whom all those wonderful things are spoken. It is our best friend, our eldest brother, one who having loved us at the first loves us to the end. What have we to fear, therefore, having so true a friend invested with such power, dignity, and dominion? If the world looks dark and threatening, is it not because He permits it to do so? If men trouble and distress us, may we not be sure that He, for some wise purpose, has given them permission? If sickness, pain, and anguish come, is it not because He who loves us with an everlasting love has sent them? Ay, the rulers of the darkness of this world, the spiritual wickedness in high places, may assault us on every side, but to them as to the stormy ocean he can say, "Hitherto shall ye come and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed." Nay; death and the grave, too; those names, the terror of which has kept our race in bondage ever since Adam,

have, or ought to have, no terrors for us. Death's sting and the grave's victory are gone. He has overcome them both. He has been death's plague and the grave's destruction, and now they are, or ought to be, undreaded names. To fear them now is to fear a spoiled enemy. Death is death no longer. Christ has made it life. Immortal roses bloom on its pale cheek: unfading beauty encircles its cold ashes.

We must suppose that when the Psalmist informs us of what Christ will do in the day of His wrath, he alludes not to any one particular period, but to all the periods of vengeance in which Christ's enemies have been, or shall yet be, destroyed. He begins the relation of this day's disasters with an account of the overthrow of the great ones of the earth—its principalities and powers: "He shall strike through *kings* in the day of his wrath." When the day of vengeance is in Christ's heart, it will be not only the weak and insignificant enemies of His Gospel that shall fall before Him, but much rather the strong and powerful.

I conceive that the best explanation of these words—"He shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath"—is to be found in Dan. ii. 44, where he says, "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and it shall *break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms*, and it shall stand for ever." Now the God of heaven set up this kingdom when He exalted Christ at His right hand. But, according to the Prophet, when this kingdom was set up the other kingdoms that had preceded it began to be consumed and broken in pieces; and so, according to

the Psalmist, Christ strikes through kings as the first act of His wrath after His exaltation. There is a strong probability, therefore, that both the Prophet and the Psalmist allude to the same events in the Gospel history. It is the putting down of all rule and all authority and power that oppose themselves to Christ and His cause, that is meant in general, although, in all probability, particular allusion is made to the overthrow of the Roman Empire, and the breaking in pieces the throne of the Cæsars.

It is always the day of Christ's wrath when men's sins are ripe for punishment, but never till then. The day of His wrath is only the revelation of His righteous judgment, when He shall render to men according to their deeds. It is only when they have despised the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, and with a hard and impenitent heart have treasured up wrath for themselves, that the day of Christ's wrath shall be revealed.

Observe how the very extremes of long-suffering, tenderness, and pity on the one hand, and of anger, wrath, and fury on the other, are represented as being united in Christ. "I am meek and lowly in heart," He says in the Gospel. "I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury," He says in the Prophet. In one place we see Him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world: in another place we hear the great of the earth crying to the mountains and the rocks to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Here He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers, so He openeth not His mouth: there

the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand. Now all this was written for our sakes. The God with whom we have to do is indeed merciful, long-suffering, and of great compassion, but He is one that will not by any means spare the guilty. As sure as His hand shall be made known towards His friends, so sure shall His indignation be made known towards His enemies. (Isa. lxvi. 14.) Christ's day of "meekness" is our day of grace: Christ's day of "wrath" is our day of despair. Oh, then, let us so improve the day of His meekness that we may never see the day of His wrath!

But it will not be only the kings and the mighty of the earth that Christ will punish in the day of His wrath; when His fury shall begin to be poured out, its streams shall descend upon the nations at large. "He shall judge among the heathen," says the Psalmist; "he shall fill the places with dead bodies." Allusion is made here, in all probability, to those woes that were poured out on the nations which were brought under our notice in the Second Psalm. The Prophet Isaiah also speaks of what we may regard as this very "judging among the heathen," only in milder terms than the Psalmist. "Out of Zion shall go forth the law," he says, "and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people." (Isa. ii. 4.) You see how both the Prophet and the Psalmist connect this judgment among the heathen with the spread of Christ's kingdom in the world. As soon as the law shall have gone forth out of Zion, we are informed that He shall judge among the nations, by the Prophet; and after the rod of Christ's strength shall have been sent out of

Zion, we find in the Psalmist kings stricken and the heathen judged. But it is remarkable that Isaiah connects immediately with this judgment of the nations that flourishing and happy state of things which we are wont to associate with the millennial glory. He continues,—"And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." You observe how the Prophet notices only these two great distinguishing features of the Gospel history, namely, Christ's judgment among the nations, and the subsequent universal and everlasting peace. Just as in the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth chapters of his prophecy, after describing the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion, he exclaims, exultingly, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." In both places perhaps, and most certainly in the last, there is more particular allusion to some great indignation yet to come, which shall usher in and prepare the way for the triumphant state of the Church in that period of its history which we call the millennium. And I cannot help thinking that there is a similar connexion in these very verses of the Psalmist at present under our consideration. The last words, "Therefore shall he lift up the head," spoken of Christ as our spiritual Samson, must have some force beyond the mere filling up of a figure. The meaning cannot be that Christ Himself shall be revived by any refreshment after His victories. Christ exalted at God's right hand can no more experience thirst or weariness, as in the days

of His humiliation. The lifting up of Christ's head must therefore signify the lifting up of His Church's head, that is, the advancement of His people to glory and dominion. It is observable that it is immediately after the head over many countries* is stricken, that Christ's head is said to be lifted up. If we suppose, therefore, that the "head over many countries" is the Antichrist foretold, we shall have the same connexion of events as in other parts of God's Word. The highest pitch of the Church's greatness is ever associated with the fall of Antichrist.

In the Prophet Ezekiel there is a remarkable prophecy of the destruction of Gog, which, most probably, relates to the very same times as those spoken of by the Psalmist and the Prophet Isaiah. There, also, there is a judging among the nations, and a wide-spread carnage; and this is immediately followed by the restoration of the Jews to their own land, which, as we have already seen, is the sure harbinger of the millennial glory. "And it shall come to pass in that day," says God, "that I will give to Gog a place there of graves in Israel . . . and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude. Seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land." (Ezek. xxxix. 11, 12.) Here the places shall be so filled with dead bodies, that the last bones of the slain shall not be removed from the land within seven months

* English Version: "The heads over many countries." Literally, "The head over much country." Allusion seems to be made to some widely-reigning power, most probably the Antichrist, the fall of whom precedes the setting up of Christ's universal kingdom.

after the slaughter. But God proceeds in the twenty-first verse, "And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see *my judgment* that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them." Here, you observe, is the judging among the heathen, spoken of in the Psalm. Now hear what follows this judgment on the nations. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name. . . . . Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there." (Verses 25, 28.) Here is the Jewish restoration as plainly foretold as language can foretel it, and no spiritualizing can explain it away. But this restoration is said to follow immediately on the destruction of Gog, or the pouring out of God's judgments on the nations. Now, if you compare these three passages together, you will be almost forced to the conclusion that they all relate to the same great event in the Gospel history. "He shall judge among the heathen," says the Psalmist; "he shall wound the head over much country;" *and then* "he shall drink of the brook in the way, and therefore lift up the head." "He shall judge among the nations," says the Prophet Isaiah, "and shall rebuke many people;" *and then* "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks." "He shall set his glory among the heathen," says the prophet Ezekiel, "and all the heathen shall see his judgment;" *and then* "he shall bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole

house of Israel." Here is a threefold description of that state of things which will follow the judgments that shall be poured out upon the earth. To lift up the head—to beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks, and to restore Israel and Judah to their own land, are only different phrases employed by the inspired penmen, when they speak of that glorious time when the enemies of Jesus shall be subdued, and the kingdom shall be given to the saints of the Most High. Just as our Lord Himself tells His disciples (Luke xxi. 25), that "there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth *distress of nations;* the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. *And then* they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Here, you observe, is the very same connexion of events as we have found in the Psalmist and the Prophets, namely, distress of nations, *and then* the Son of man coming—coming in the glory and majesty of His kingdom.

According to these prophecies, therefore, brethren, we are approaching times of trouble and suffering, such as have not been from the creation of the world until now. This judgment among the nations must take place before the Jews are restored to their own land; and all the signs of the fulfilment of prophecy tend to show that that restoration cannot be far off. There are wars in our own day, and rumours of war. The nations are heaving in the throes of some dire delivery. There is that restlessness, that looking for of something dreadful and indefinite; that failing of heart,—which generally precede, in nations

and individuals alike, the summing up of some dark catastrophe. The materials and sinews of war, bloodshed, and ruin are being accumulated. The nations are vieing with each other which shall be first in the arts and appliances of destruction. All things will soon be ready; and the feathered fowls and beasts of the field shall be invited to gather themselves to the sacrifice. The judgment shall soon commence, if it has not already commenced, among the nations, and the places shall be filled with dead bodies. The day of wrath is near—the darkness of the storm ready to burst,—the horror of breathless expectation—the torrents of wrath descending from an angry heaven—the heaps upon heaps—the smitten head. Then shall Adonai rest from His toil; He shall drink of the brook in the way, and one universal shout shall proclaim, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

When we read that Christ "shall drink of the brook in the way, and therefore lift up the head," we see Him represented as a warrior faint and weary, after all the fighting and carnage of the day of His wrath.* Kings

* Grotius: "Descriptio bellatoris alacris, qui dum hostes persequitur, non quærit diversoria aut cauponas ut vino se refoveat, sed aqua contentus est, quam obiter et raptim sumit ex quovis quem reperit non fluvio tantum, sed et torrente.—Sic Christus nullum tempus omisit quo opera diaboli destruere posset.—It is a description of a strenuous warrior, who while he pursues the enemy, does not seek to refresh himself with wine, but is content with water, which he takes wherever he can find it, not only from the stream, but even from the torrent. Thus Christ lost no opportunity of destroying the works of the devil." Water, however, as Hengstenberg well remarks, is never considered a drink of inferior description in the East; and in Scripture it is always the emblem of what revives.

This passage, "He shall drink of the brook in the way," &c.,

have been smitten, the heathen have been judged, the head over much country hath been smitten; and now His work is done, His battles are all fought, his enemies are made His footstool. The similitude of a warrior is borne out to the last; He has fought as a warrior, and as a warrior He thirsts after His engagement; He therefore drinks of the brook in the way. He droops under His toil; but He drinks, and lifts up the head. There is evidently an allusion here to Samson's thirsting after his destruction of the Philistines. When, like our great spiritual Samson, he had "filled the places with dead bodies," we are told that he was sore athirst. When, however, he had drunk of the water miraculously provided for him, his spirit came again, and he revived—he drank of the brook in the way, and therefore lifted up the head.

Brethren, I have now accomplished the task which I proposed to myself when I began these discourses on the Messianic Psalms. It was not my intention, as I have already stated, to bring before you all the Psalms that

is often interpreted of Christ's humiliation in the flesh, as if it were only another version of what St. Paul tells us when he says, "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." (Phil. ii. 8.) But this Psalm commences with a period when Christ's humiliation was past, and He was already exalted; and the whole of it, to the last verse, relates, as all admit, to events subsequent to that exaltation. We can hardly suppose, therefore, that the last verse should carry us back to a period prior to that contemplated in all the rest of the Psalm.

The idea of humiliation, moreover, on the part of Christ, seems foreign to the warlike, triumphant character of this Psalm.

have Christ for their theme. Out of many I chose these three, as being most markedly and exclusively prophetical of Him who is the spring and fountain of all the brightest hopes of our existence. And surely, when the Holy Ghost deigned to inspire men to write such remarkable compositions, He had some great and merciful object in view. It was not for nothing that these songs were written. It was not that they should be read over day after day, in the closet, the family, or the congregation, without their being understood, or at the most leaving but a vague and indefinite impression behind. Yet how many read them without having the remotest idea of their meaning! How many read them, and are ignorant all the while that it is of Christ they are reading! But surely these things ought not so to be. All that has been written has been written for our learning; but in order to learn it is necessary to read, hear, study, and examine. It is our blessed Lord's own command that we should search the Scriptures, for that they testify of Him. Now if their testimony of Christ lay on the surface it would not be necessary to *search* for it; the very word "search" implies concealment. Christ is in all the Bible; but, in order to find Him in many parts of it, we must seek Him as silver, and search for Him as for hid treasures. (Prov. ii. 4.)

But recollect that, no matter how deeply and diligently we have studied the testimony which the Scriptures bear to Jesus of Nazareth, yet so long as we are personally unacquainted with Himself, our labour has been in vain—we have spent our strength for nought. The chief priests and scribes of Jerusalem had searched the Scriptures and

could inform the wise men where Christ was to be born; but their search ended there, and therefore ended too soon. They ought to have extended it still farther, and searched for the young child Himself. Let us not be like the chief priests and scribes. We have found glorious prophecies; O let us not rest with the prophecies, but search for Him of whom they were written. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. It is the finger of the Baptist pointing humanity to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. O, then, let us, like the two disciples in the Gospel, follow Him to whom it points us. With Him, and with Him alone, are all things that the immortal within us needs or craves. He gives unto us eternal life—and in that one word what unspeakable inconceivable treasures are stored up! All that the soul longs after, in its highest and holiest aspirations, are there. There love is reunited, there the lost is found. There there is no sin, and therefore no sorrow.

"Unto him therefore that loved us, and washed us in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen."

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